



Urban gardeners go for regional and national awards

NOW WE'RE READY TO BLOOM AGAIN

Report by Jamie Brassington

HALESOWEN is leading the way for the West Midlands in a national scheme to brighten up urban areas with blooms.

The Halesowen in Bloom campaign is in the running for a national award following its success in 2017 when crowned the Midland's best 'Urban Community' in the Britain in Bloom contest.

Now Halesowen in Bloom will be rooting for a national title in August and also in July will again be entering the Midlands category, which is officially known as the Heart of England.

Halesowen North ward councillor Hilary Bills, secretary of the group, said: "It is wonderful that the Halesowen in Bloom campaign is in the running for two awards this year."

"This is a reward for all the volunteers because Halesowen in Bloom wouldn't happen without their hard work in planting flowers and picking up litter. I'm delighted for them."

Last year, volunteers clocked up 7,500 hours of work in the campaign to brighten up the town.

Colourful planters were carefully placed around the town and the theme was bats, with volunteers crafting origami bat figures alongside the flowers which were on display across the town centre.

Buttons

This year's theme will be on Halesowen's history, in particular the legacy of button-making with lots of buttons incorporated into floral designs.

Halesowen was once home to the James Grove & Sons button making factory, on Stourbridge Road, which closed down in 2012.

For generations, skilled craftsmen turned out the highest-quality buttons for the biggest names in fashion.

A descendant of the family which owned the factory will be invited along to see the Halesowen in Bloom displays in July, the same month that judges will visit.

Halesowen in Bloom won gold for the third year running in the regional section last year. Britain in Bloom is run by the Royal Horticultural Society and is now in its 54th year.

Seventy-six groups will be battling it out with Halesowen the only Black Country entry in the Heart of England section.

NED'S ATOMIC TIPPLE IS THE WONDER STUFF



Jonny Penny, of Ned's Atomic Dustbin, and Miles Hunt, of The Wonder Stuff, launch the new beer named in their honour

ROCKERS Ned's Atomic Dustbin and The Wonder Stuff's Miles Hunt shared a pint back on home turf when they launched a new ale in their honour.

Ned's Wonder – a limited edition 4.1 per cent ale from Birmingham-based Froth Blowers Brewing Co – has been created to mark the forthcoming Love From Stourbridge tour, which will feature sets from both bands.

Miles joined Ned's members Jonny Penny

and Rat to perform a few acoustic numbers at The Duke William pub in Coventry Street, Stourbridge, in front of a select crowd before raising a glass as the first pint of Ned's Wonder was pulled.

Pub manager Jason Taylor, aged 39, said: "It was very successful – there were about 80 people upstairs."

"Everything went well and the three barrels we had all went."

"It is a malty beer and it is a more traditional style ale – we are sort of spoilt now with the choices of ales we have but this is a good base beer."

"I can't see why we would not have it on while they were touring."

"Hopefully it will crop up in a lot more local boozers – it is more choice for the community. They all enjoyed it and I think it will do well on the tour."

CRIME

Public warned over bogus water workers

POLICE have issued a warning following a spate of distraction burglaries carried out by crooks posing as water company workers.

Elderly people in Dudley, Tipton and Oldbury have been targeted by fraudsters claiming to be from water companies, who trick their way into homes and then search for money and valuables.

Severn Trent Water is also investigating, after reminding the public that their staff will always be in uniform. A police spokesman said: "These types of burglaries target vulnerable and elderly people."

HIPPODROME

Protest outside council house

A **PROTEST** will be held outside of Dudley Council house today (Thursday) ahead of a meeting that could decide the fate of Dudley Hippodrome.

Dudley Council's cabinet is due to decide this evening if campaigners given the keys to the Castle Hill landmark have met the aims laid out at the start of the project to save the venue. The protest is from 5.15pm.

COURT

Romanian killer stabbed sister-in-law

A **KILLER** from Romania, who had battered a man to death in his home country, tried to kill his sister-in-law just eight months after being allowed into the UK.

Gheorghe 'Melo' Mihai launched a savage attack on 23-year-old Roxana Mihai in Lye when she interrupted a conversation he was having with his brother. He stabbed her in the face, head, arm and back.

● Like a man possessed – page 3

INSIDE

MUNICH IS REMEMBERED



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Man who stole £230k to pay back £10



David Kettle – thief

A FAILED businessman who stole almost £230,000 from his sick elderly mother must repay just £10, a court has ruled.

David Kettle, 64, had falsely said he was using the money to pay for the care of his 93-year-old mother at a Bridgnorth nursing home.

At a hearing at Shrewsbury Crown Court under the Proceeds of Crime Act this week, Kettle's benefit from his criminal actions was said to be £228,575.

Having been told Kettle had no means to pay the monies Judge Peter

Barrie imposed the £10 nominal confiscation order.

In August last year Kettle, of Crabtree Lane, Bromsgrove, was jailed for a total of five years and nine months. He had pleaded guilty to stealing £228,575 from his mother between January, 2015 and July, 2016.

In a basis of plea, Kettle had claimed that his mother had known about the fast food business venture. However, Judge Jonathan Gosling dismissed Kettle's claim.

The theft was uncovered after Kettle

had agreed to pay the fees at his mother's nursing home, but concerns were 'flagged up' over £25,000 of unpaid bills.

Mr Timothy Ashmole, prosecuting, said Mrs Kettle's GP said that she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2013 and Kettle was due to arrange power of attorney but he never did.

The court heard how by April 2015 Mrs Kettle would not have had the capacity to sign a cheque. Bank statements from Mrs Kettle's funds revealed payments to a businessman for a fast food restaurant in Halesowen.

Council tax is set to rise by 4.5 per cent

DUDLEY Council is set to raise council tax by 4.5 per cent from April.

The authority is planning to increase council tax by 2.99 per cent, and charge households a further 1.5 per cent to fund adult social care.

Councillor Steve Clark, cabinet member for finance, said: "No council wants to increase council tax, but this small increase is the right thing to do for our residents."

Most households, in band B properties, will pay an extra 82p per week if the plans are approved. Households in band D properties will pay an extra £1.05.

Nearly 1,500 took part in consultation, called the Big Question, which ended last month. Council bosses will discuss the results at cabinet today (Thursday).

Last year the Government agreed to a deal allowing councils to increase council tax by 2.99 per cent and also approved a new social care precept – an extra rise in council tax – to generate money specifically for adult social care for older and more vulnerable people.

Savings

Councils were allowed to increase council tax under the precept between one and three per cent, with Dudley Council opting for a 1.5 per cent increase. This would make it the second lowest council tax rate in the country of metropolitan boroughs.

It comes at a time when local authorities face a fall in funding from central government.

Dudley Council has put forward savings of £4m for the next financial year starting from April.

Council bosses will also consider increasing the social care precept by a further 1.5 per cent from April 2019, under proposed government rules. Councillor Clark continued: "We've already made significant savings, including £4m additional savings in 2018/19, but we still need to invest in our services."

A decision will be made at a full council meeting on February 19.

Fans in tribute to disaster victims



Fans at Old Trafford paid tribute to the victims of the Munich air disaster including Dudley's Duncan Edwards

"MANCHESTER, Munich and Dudley will forever be united."

That was the moving final tribute in a special book of remembrance for Dudley-born football hero Duncan Edwards.

Rose Cook-Monk has handed the book over in the German city to mark the 60th anniversary of the Munich air crash, which claimed the life of England player Dun-

can and seven of his Manchester United team-mates, as well as several club officials, fans, journalists and air crew.

On the last page of the book she wrote: "On behalf of the Duncan Edwards Foundation, our Mayor Councillor Dave Tyler and the people of Dudley, I am proud to hand over the book of remembrance dedicated to Duncan. We are immensely

proud of Duncan, his achievements and the wonderful person he was. Manchester, Munich and Dudley will forever be united."

Around a thousand Manchester United fans visited the German city as part of a commemoration, while supporters also paid tribute at Old Trafford on Saturday and on Tuesday to the 'Busby Babes' team.

● Such great lads – page 12

Flexible and simplified new disability services due

DISABILITY services in Dudley are set to be transformed as part of a shake-up of special education and social care.

Dudley Council's cabinet were being asked to rubber-stamp plans for the new-look service at a meeting yesterday (Wednesday).

Chiefs said the proposals 'will improve co-ordination of care for people with disabilities from childhood through to adulthood'. The new service puts 'greater emphasis on helping people gain skills and knowledge, and have confidence and a social life', bosses added.

Councillor Nicolas Barlow, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "This is a major transformation of services which will help people live a full and independent life."

"We have talked to services users and carers in recent months who have told us we need to do more to simplify processes, improve our response times and offer greater flexibility in the way we do things."

"We know all of these things combined with the fact that people should at the very least have a consistent and quality experience regardless of age, the introduction of the whole life disability service is a key move to transform the way we do things and ultimately improves a person's quality of life."

Original shop to go after 130 years

A FAMILY-run jewellery business will close one of its shops after more than 130 years trading on a Black Country high street.

TH Bakers, which opened in 1888, has announced it will be closing its store in Brierley Hill High Street, which was its first shop. The company, which owns 30 stores around the country, will still operate other Black Country branches.

Paul Griffiths, a spokesman for the company, said: "The reason for the store's closure is due to long term declining trade on the high street to a point that, after trading on the high street for 130 years, keeping the store open is no longer feasible. However we are still trading in all of our other store areas, including Merry Hill, Stourbridge and Halesowen."

No need to shush at library blues gig

A COUNTRY-BLUES band will be playing a library gig on Saturday. The Whiskey Poets including author RJ Ellory and former ELO member Martin Smith are at Blackheath Library on Saturday at 7pm. Tickets with meal are £8 adults and £3 children. Call 0121 559 1884.

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Teenager is cleared of Ryan murder

A TEENAGER has been cleared of murdering amateur footballer Ryan Passey who was stabbed during a brawl in a Stourbridge nightclub.

Kobe Murray, of The Broadway, Dudley, was also found not guilty of manslaughter as the jury returned its unanimous verdicts on Tuesday after five hours. Mr Passey, aged 24, died of a fatal knife wound after fighting broke out on the dance floor of Chicago's in the town centre.

The 19-year-old trainee plasterer who was on trial maintained he took the knife from a friend and pushed forwards out of fear as punches were thrown, not meaning to injure or kill anyone.

The victim's family reacted with shock as the verdict was given at Birmingham Crown Court. In tears outside the court, his father Adrian Passey said it was 'disgusting'.

Judge Julian Goose, QC, said: "In the end the jury made their decision. They have made it clear and there is nothing further that needs to be said."

Mr Passey's mother, Gillian Taylor, of Netherton, said: "This will open the floodgates for others to go out with knives."

Close family friend Jason Connon, speaking on behalf of the family, said: "We're shocked and numb, and in total disbelief."

Company director Mr Connon, a neighbour of the Passeys, said: "We just can't believe what has happened. This has hit Ade and Gill hard. How do we move forward?"

Mr Passey, from Quarry Bank, who had played for the youth team at Stourbridge FC, was fatally wounded at the club in the Ryemarket at around 1am on August 6 last year.

250 jobs face axe at the Waterfront

MORE than 250 jobs could be lost if tax offices are closed in Dudley under government plans.

HMRC staff based at the Waterfront in Brierley Hill were last week told the offices could close. It would mark a U-turn after staff were previously told they would be transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions. In October, staff were told they would remain based at the Waterfront.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin is urging the Government to keep the offices open. He said: "This decision has come as a huge shock to staff I met over the weekend. These are hard-working and highly-skilled public servants. They are very worried about their future and we need to ensure their jobs stay in Dudley."

An HMRC spokesperson said: "We will do everything we can to find alternative roles for our staff, as the tax credits work they do reduces in the years ahead."

Violent thug had been in Romanian jail



Gheorghe Mihai

HE had murdered before in his home country but that did stop Romanian killer Gheorghe 'Melo' Mihai entering this country – and trying to murder again.

The 38-year-old could not be refused entry because he had served the seven year sentence imposed in 2006 for battering a man to death with a piece of wood in September 2004, was not wanted for any other crime and did not need to tell officials of his alarming previous conviction when he came to the UK at the end of 2016.

Romania is a member of the European Union and its citizens benefit from 'free movement' rights. They do not need a visa

to visit or work here and so avoid the checks made on people from nations not in the EU, who must give details of any previous criminal conviction before it is decided whether to let them in.

Just eight months after his arrival Mihai launched a savage knife attack on his 23-year-old sister-in-law Roxana Mihai during a terrifying drunken rampage in Lye High Street near Stourbridge on August 7.

He was found guilty of attempted murder at Wolverhampton Crown Court this week and warned he faces a lengthy sentence.

The car wash attendant flew into a rage after she interrupted a conversation he was

having with her husband. "He looked like a man possessed," said an eye witness, lorry driver Kieran Langan.

Mihai had gone to a bus shelter where Roxana was waiting with her husband, to ask his step-brother Nicursor Gheorghe for money. He said: "My wife then told him we had no money because we had sent it to our family in Romania. He said to her 'why are you talking in our conversation' and took out a knife. I held him to let my wife run and hide." But the defendant gave chase and deliberately tripped the fleeing woman when he caught up with her on a car park before stabbing her at least four times.

Convicted killer tried to murder his sister-in-law

A CONVICTED Romanian killer who tried to murder again after being allowed into this country is facing up to 20 years behind bars.

Gheorghe Mihai launched a savage knife attack on his sister-in-law in Lye High Street, just months after arriving in the UK, Wolverhampton Crown court heard.

Fellow Romanian Gaman Bobi told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Mihai was drunk when he repeatedly stabbed 23-year-old Roxana Mihai. Mr Bobi told the court: "He told me he was going to kill someone and go to jail for 10 years. I thought he was joking because he had drunk too much."

It took the jury less than two hours on Monday to convict Mihai of attempted murder.

He was warned by Judge Amjad Nawaz: "You are somebody with a predisposition to act in a violent way and a lengthy sentence awaits you."

Danger

The case was adjourned so that a report could be prepared on the level of danger he represents to the public.

The 38-year-old defendant – locked up for seven years after murdering a man in his home country in 2006 – attacked his sister-in-law in August 7 after she interrupted a conversation he was having with her husband, his step-brother Nicursor Gheorghe.

Witness Kieran Langan said the defendant, who lived in Park Street, Lye, looked like 'a man possessed'. He continued: "He was in a rage. I could tell that she was scared. Then I saw him open his jacket and pull out a large kitchen knife."

Terrified Roxana ran away pursued by knife-wielding Mihai and he caught up with her on a car park behind High Street, stabbing her at least four times as she lay on the ground.

She suffered several knife wounds before her life was saved when her husband reached the scene and punched her attacker in the face.

The defendant had denied attempted murder and possession of an offensive weapon.

The organist entertains in Cradley



Richard Jeffcoat plays for organist James Brookes and Rev Katryn Leclézio, Vicar of Cradley

A CHURCH organ built in 1933 has been restored after £6,000 was raised by the community.

A special recital will be held to mark the renovation of the Compton organ at St Peter's Parish Church in Cradley.

The organ needed a new blower and a second-hand one was

salvaged from the demolished Church of St Luke, which was located in Cradley Heath.

The musical instrument has now been serviced and is being used for services and concerts.

The recital will take place at the church on Saturday from 2.30pm, by organist Richard Jeffcoat. He

was among those who helped to move the blower.

Refreshments will be available following the recital, where Halesowen Hand Bell Ringers will also perform music.

The event will be rounded off by a service of popular hymns and songs.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chance to quiz region's mayor

PEOPLE will be given the chance to quiz the Mayor of the West Midlands in Dudley. Metro Mayor Andy Street will be holding the latest of his 'Ask Andy' sessions at Dudley College Musical Theatre, at Dudley Evolve on Tower Street, on March 5.

He said: "This is your chance to ask me about the progress we are making as a region in transforming transport, housing and skills. These are exciting times for the West Midlands and I want many people to be at Dudley College so I can talk to them about how (this) will affect their lives." The event is at 7.15pm by ticket only. Visit eventbrite.co.uk for free tickets.

Kindon is speaker at charity dinner

FORMER Wolves star Steve Kindon is the guest speaker at a sportsman's dinner in aid of the Smile For Joel charity next month.

The event takes place at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill on Thursday, March 1.

Tables of 10 are £400 plus VAT with a former player from either Villa, Wolves, Albion, Blues or Walsall on each table. Contact Route 39 on 01902 244220 to book places.

The cause was set up in memory of the Black Country's Tunisia terror attack victims.

Singing to bring back memories

A SINGING group in Sedgley is helping people with dementia bring back memories and reconnect with loved ones by singing old favourite tunes.

The Salvation Army has launched a programme called 'Singing By Heart' for people with dementia. It uses a mixture of popular songs and hymns, each carefully selected to ensure they are recognised.

Singing By Heart takes place at the rear of All Saints Church hall in Sedgley. The next sessions run from 2pm to 3.30pm on February 26, then on March 26, April 23 and May 28.

Gravel helps giraffes keep hooves healthy

DUDLEY Zoo's three giraffes are keeping their feet neat following a fresh delivery of gravel.

Keepers at Dudley Zoo have spread 40 tonnes of gravel across the 40-acre site refreshing the giraffe and reinder paddocks.

The loose chippings have an important use for the long-legged ungulates as it helps naturally wear their hooves down. Giraffes Kubwa, Josie and Kito have regular hoof inspections.



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4 Inquest hears fourth suspect under arrest after murder

A FOURTH man has been arrested on suspicion of murdering shopkeeper Jaskaran Kang, who was stabbed to death in a flat above a shop in Dudley.

The 24-year-old father was found dead at the property above the Mini Mart on Stourbridge Road, Dudley, in the early hours of Saturday, January 6.

An inquest into the death of Mr Kang, from Handsworth, was opened and adjourned on Friday at Black Country Coroner's Court, where it was revealed he was stabbed nine times and died from a stab wound to the leg.

Detective Inspector Justin Spanner, leading the investigation called Operation Plym, told the hearing: "Police were called at 2.29am on January 6 to a flat, which was one of three flats above Dudley Wines (Mini Mart), to a male who had been stabbed."

"Upon arrival ambulances were already there. Jaskaran Kang was found there with nine stab wounds. An altercation occurred and he received stab wounds."

Suspicion

DI Spanner confirmed three people had been charged with murder and revealed that further suspects had been arrested including another man on suspicion of murder.

Coroner Zafar Siddique adjourned the inquest until the conclusion of the police investigation.

Three people charged with murder have appeared in court, Reggie Salmon, 20 from Stourbridge Road, Dudley, a 17-year-old youth from Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Dontay Ellis, 18, of Central Drive, Lower Gornal. They are to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on March 16 to enter a plea.

£60m Commonwealth Games aquatics centre gets backing

Leap in to help maintain city woods

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help promote a city-wide drive to get more people outdoors.

Deer's Leap Wood in Harborne, Birmingham, reopened to the public last year after undergoing a restoration.

The Wildlife Trust site received a £12,000 grant from Tesco and additional funding from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and underwent a series of transformations across three years.

Now the site has become part of the Birmingham Active Parks Programme, a scheme set up to encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles and spend more time in nature.

Residents are invited to take part in volunteer days at the reserve, undertaking vital conservation management whilst improving their fitness in the great outdoors.

Trust senior ecologist Paul Stephenson said: "The transformation this woodland has seen over the last few years is nothing short of remarkable and it is wonderful to see it being used for such a great purpose."

"Given the role it plays in the city's history and ecology, it is brilliant to see the space restored to its former glory and it is once more a stunning bit of nature for locals to spend time."

Since launching in 2015, Tesco's Bags of Help community grant programme has provided more than 10,000 community projects with £43million of funding.



Mark Jowett (volunteer), Sandra Herbert (Tesco), Thomas Cantwell (volunteer), Paul Stephenson (Wildlife Trust), Vicky Holden (Tesco) and David Gaussen (volunteer)

A £60 million aquatics centre which will host Commonwealth Games events in Smethwick has moved a stop closer after being backed by senior councillors.

The state-of-the-art facility has been earmarked for playing fields on Londonderry Lane, and will feature an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a 25-metre diving pool and 5,000 spectator seats. It will then become a leisure centre following the conclusion of the 2022 Games.

The aquatics centre plan was approved by Sandwell Council's cabinet last Wednesday. Planning permission will now be required before work can start on the centre.

It will play host to swimming and diving events at the Games in four years' time, after Birmingham was confirmed as the host city.

The centre will serve as a replacement for the outdated Smethwick Swimming Centre, also known as Thimblemill Baths, and Langley Swimming Centre. Council bosses have promised to provide alternative football pitches to make up for land lost on Londonderry Lane.

Fantastic

Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling said: "There's a lot of excitement building around the Commonwealth Games and it's going to be fantastic for the area. We're very proud to be part of it and to be hosting the swimming and diving events here in Sandwell."

"We were already looking to replace our ageing swimming centres at Langley and Smethwick, which no longer meet the needs of users - and the Commonwealth Games gives us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build an even better new leisure facility to serve the local community for decades to come."

Event needs runners and volunteers

PEOPLE have been urged to join the Sandwell Valley park run - with organisers keen to get more fun and serious athletes taking to the country park course.

It is a timed five-kilometre event which takes place every Saturday morning, staffed by volunteers and free of charge for runners of all abilities to turn up and enjoy running together safely. Since the first run in November, nearly 800 runners have run a combined distance of 6,625km.

Event director Chris Jones said: "We have been overwhelmed by the response to our parkrun. Since the first run when 212 people turned up to take part, the buzz that has surrounded the event has been great."

People interested in the parkrun should visit www.parkrun.org.uk/sandwellvalley or email sandwellvalleyoffice@parkrun.com.

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Coach travel firm goes into liquidation

A TRAVEL company that closed unexpectedly last month and left customers hundreds out pounds out of pocket has gone into liquidation.

Group Travel Limited, a coach firm based in Audnam, Stourbridge, announced it has appointed insolvency expert Paul Brindley.

A statement from the company, which also has a branch in Shrewsbury, said all customers owed money would receive a letter from the liquidator. It added: "If you have not received a letter from the liquidator by February 5, and you have paid for a trip or voucher you have not received, please call the liquidator. To all trade creditors, the letter from the liquidator should be with you by February 5. If you have not received it by February 8, give the liquidator a call."

Roy Dade, from Shrewsbury, had a trip cancelled in November and is still waiting for a full refund. The 58-year-old was due to travel to London with his wife to see Annie the musical but was told on November 4 the trip had been cancelled. He was given £150 cash towards the £330 he was owed.

He said: "It's a sad story really because we have booked a lot of trips with them over the years, but at least it looks like they're trying to do the right thing now."

Contact the liquidator on 0800 2315788.

Airport trials audio aid for blind in toilet

BIRMINGHAM Airport has become the first in the UK to fit RoomMate, an audio description unit for the visually impaired, in one of its disabled access toilets. It provides an audio description of the facility. Persons with Reduced Mobility Manager Ed Kibblewhite said: "We pride ourselves on offering excellent facilities to all of our customers."

It's D-day for new council homes across Dudley borough

Phyllis helps charity on 100th birthday

A FORMER school cook from Oldbury who battled through cancer at the age of 99 has celebrated reaching her 100th birthday.

Great-grandmother Phyllis Crumpton, who lives on the Brandhall Estate, was delighted to spend the day with family and friends at Halesowen Golf Club on January 27 for a celebratory party.

The occasion was made even more poignant due to Mrs Crumpton being in hospital with cancer on her 99th birthday. So, in lieu of presents, she asked if her friends and family could contribute to a collection for Macmillan Cancer Support. A total of £535 was raised for the charity.

Her son, Robert Crumpton, 70, said: "We had a nice buffet and everyone circulated. She had a really lovely time. I think there about 50 people there - including children - but we were just blown away by the generosity from different people giving money to the charity."

Mrs Crumpton retired as chief cook at Perryfields High School in 1982, a job she had held for 12 years. She was also believed to be one of the oldest to qualify at the Halesowen Technical College when she was in her 50s.

A keen pianist, she would often play the piano for local pantomimes.

Born Phyllis Brown, she married George Crumpton in October 1942. She also has three grandsons and two great-grandsons.



Phyllis with her 100th birthday message from the Her Majesty the Queen

IT is decision day for a plan to build more than 300 council homes in Dudley over the next five years, at a cost of more than £30 million.

The proposals go before Dudley Council's cabinet at a meeting today (Thursday).

The local authority has outlined ambitious plans to build new and improve existing council housing in the borough in a scheme with a total cost of £232m. A Dudley Council spokesman said: "Our five-year programme going forward from April 2018 involves a proposed spend of over £30m, which aims to deliver in excess of 300 new homes."

The council is also proposing to spend £72m on the maintenance of existing council housing, including kitchen and bathroom replacements and work on roofs, doors and windows.

More than £22m has been identified to address fuel poverty, including improving central heating and providing more affordable heating in 3,250 homes, also reducing carbon emissions.

Nearly £31m would be spent on work to support independent living, including home adaptations for tenants with disabilities, plus and improvements to sheltered and supported homes. More than £13m will be invested in community and estate regeneration.

Councillor Laura Taylor, cabinet member for housing, said: "We are committed to doing all we can to improve the standard of living for our tenants, and this huge investment over the next five years reflects that. The future is bright for Dudley."

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people to live and work here by offering good quality, fit for purpose, modern council homes."

Money spent on council homes is ring-fenced, and it is mainly sourced from rental income from tenants and receipts from right-to-buy sales.

The council says the programme of works has no impact on the level of council tax.

Canal watch for waterways

STEPS are being taken to ensure historic canals across the West Midlands are kept safe and secure.

A neighbourhood watch scheme is being launched by the Canal and River Trust with West Midlands Police to ensure that the canals remain 'quiet, tranquil places' and to deter crime.

It is called Canal Watch and the increased number of people choosing to live and work by the water will be able to sign up to it to receive police updates and free crime prevention advice.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



It's just criminal to penalise for 31mph

IF a pollster stopped you in the street and asked about your priorities for crime and policing, what would you say?

Violent crime? Putting away more burglars? Getting tough on anti-social behaviour, vandalism, and graffiti?

Or maybe you would reply: "All of these things are important, but I understand that in these days of stretched resources you can't do everything. So what I would really like is to catch motorists for doing 31mph."

I suspect the latter represents something of a minority viewpoint. But last week, just days after recording a 13 per cent rise in overall crime, and a 16 per cent increase in violent crime, the chief constable of West Mercia Police decided the burning issue was petty speeding offences.

Actually I suspect he knows full well that is not the view of the public. But there seems to be a culture among the higher echelons of most of our public services these days that their role is not to implement the will of the people, but to "change our attitudes and perceptions."

If we think burglary or yobbish behaviour is more important than straying fractionally over the speed limit, then we are clearly in need of a bit of education. Worked a treat in the old Eastern bloc.

Indeed, Mr Bangham says he wants to create a climate where the public feels embarrassed rather than aggrieved when being hit with a speeding fine, and up to a point I agree. But I think this approach will do exactly the opposite.

Think about how different attitudes to speeding were 30 or so years ago. Learner drivers were told it was ok to do up to 35mph "to keep up with the traffic", and police usually allowed people a margin of 10mph before stopping them.

But the thing was back then, if you did get caught, it really did mark you down as a bit of an idiot. Everyone knew you were driving irresponsibly and deserved all you got.

If we start penalising every single driver who strays one mph over the limit – which is basically every single driver – that stigma is gone. It becomes nothing more than a lottery, putting the self-centred boy racer in the same bracket as the little old lady on her way to a whist drive.

Mr Bangham has now sought to "clarify" the recent comments, and assures us officers will not be targeting drivers for trivial speeding infringements after all. Good.

Because if everyone is liable to be done for speeding, where's the embarrassment in that?

Getting in a state over a visit from US President



Stephen Fry – how much of this anger is genuinely about Trump



Donald Trump – how many demonstrators would turn out anytime to bash America



Lord Adonis – sneering at entire city and dancing on grave of a stricken company?

Playing Trump card – or just snobbery?

STEPHEN Fry is leading the campaign for "the most incredible protest in history" when Donald Trump makes his state visit to Britain. But how much of this anger is genuinely about Trump and how much is simply the latest manifestation of the anti-Americanism which has been festering in British society ever since we lost the War of Independence 235 years ago? It is a sneering snobbery, based on the conviction that European nations are civilised, wise and cultured while America is vulgar, brash and far too powerful. At its heart it is all about old nations envying the success of a new nation. And I wonder how many of the "anti-Trump" demonstrators would turn out at any opportunity to bash America, no matter who was the president. One of our national treasures said in an interview 10 years ago: "When they mock America for its supposed lack of knowledge, irony or sophistication, they are revealing nothing but the pathetic inadequacy and inferiority complex of the British. I absolutely hate that sneering anti-Americanism." The national treasure? Stephen Fry, since you ask.

A READER asks why it is that the latest cooking fad, Himalayan salt crystals, have lain "undisturbed beneath the mountains for one hundred million years" but come with a "best before" date of December 2018.

ONE or two old softies took me to task for suggesting serial burglars should be taken into a field and shot. I wonder whether this week's report on the armed raider known as the Night Watcher who is targeting homes in southern England, terrifying householders and stealing their valuables changes any minds. Simple question: would the world be a better or a worse place if Chummie was no longer with us? Anyway, if he really is a soldier he'll understand

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



the concept of the firing squad.

MY RECENT item on sneering at Americans reminds me of a pal who has recently had facial surgery and complains that, because of the stitches, he can no longer sneer with both sides of his mouth. My research suggests that he probably never could. Try it. Curl your lip into the sneeriest sneer you can manage and then try it with the other side of your mouth. It seems most people are one-sided sneerers. The explanation may be that, once you start sneering in childhood, you choose one side and the muscles on the other side "forget" how to curl. I dare say there are ambidextrous sneerers but I have yet to meet one.

I WROTE recently about how a friend and I had different memories of the same event, a trip to the North Pole. A reader is reminded of his amazement in discovering that he had been at the same 1980s David Bowie concert in Milton Keynes as a lifelong friend. It turned out they both remembered the heat, the expensive bottled water and the four-hour delay in leaving the car park. But both had forgotten a significant fact. My reader went home and related the amazing coincidence to his wife who replied with a mixture of bemusement and pity: "Yes, I drove us all down in the car."

DID you spot the symbol the stars wore at the Grammys to show their solidarity with the campaign against sexual harassment? It was a

white rose which also happens to be the symbol of Britain's right-on capital of liberal, gender-neutral and progressive thinking. Yorkshire. Put that kettle on, luv.

YOU may be aware that Lord Adonis, unaccountable architect of the detested HS2 and unelected crusader to overturn Brexit, is not one of my favourite people. He reinforces that status with his infamous recent tweet: "Wolverhampton, political base of Enoch Powell in the 60s and a huge Leave majority, is HQ to just one large company, Carillion!" Strange man. He seems to be sneering at an entire city while simultaneously snarling at Brexiters and dancing on the grave of a stricken company. They ought to put him in a circus for crotchety old people. But then that's exactly where he is.

I AM coping with this new online spell-check but it does make some odd connections. Who, in the name of sanity, thinks when I type "someone's" I may have intended to type "Simeon's"?

YOU have to admire the brass neck of Thomas Cook in blatantly turning sunbeds from a holiday entitlement into a paid-for extra. We were presumably supposed to cheer the travel firm's introduction of guaranteed, pre-hired sunbeds at holiday resorts. 'The end of the battle for the sunbed' crowed one headline. But at £22 a time? It is outrageous. How long before they start charging you for a seat in the dining room?

AFTER the death of Ikea founder Ingvar Kamprad was announced, I received a flurry of emails from folk joking that he ought to be buried in a flat-pack coffin. Maybe I'm getting old but it struck me as in rather poor taste.

TALKING POINT



No honey, I'm just being nice – not sexist

"THAT'S £3.50 please sweetheart."

"Thanks love, have a good day."

That could be a scene from any retail outlet at any time of the day. Yet how far can we go with pleasantries?

I ask, because walking through the centre of Wolverhampton, I encountered a hand-written notice. "A word of kindness can make someone's day."

The sentiment I wholeheartedly agree with, but not everyone may take your compliments the right way.

One rail commuter took to Twitter to express her disgust over what she called rude and misogynistic behaviour by a rail company official who had the cheek to address her as 'honey.'

Feeling patronised, she condemned the alleged put-down as 'everyday sexism'.

The company's reply – instead of an explanation or apology, she was asked if she'd prefer to be called 'pet' or 'love' next time – was probably ill-advised, but this only serves to act as a warning to others who may be easily offended by terms of endearment.

The company did apologise for what it had intended to be a light-hearted response and, while I do believe the commuter had a genuine complaint to make about the level of service, I personally think she should get a grip.

In an age when we are told that chivalry is dead, I wonder whether the same woman would complain if a 'gentleman' let her on or off the train first or held the door open for her.

From my own point of view, I have no problem with anyone I am dealing with calling me 'sweetheart', for example, they are only being polite after all. I wouldn't express the same platitudes in return as affectionate terms are only reserved for my other half. But their words will be appreciated and I will always be civil – I think please and thank you should be key words in everyone's vocabulary.

However, and this brings me back to the sign in Wolverhampton, who's to say no-one would be offended if I did call someone 'darling' for instance?

As a bloke dishing out niceties to a woman there's always the possibility that your intentions could be misread. If I tell someone their hair looks good that day or their outfit suits them, I would expect most right-minded people to take that as it is, a compliment.

We all like to be told something good about ourselves and I think one ought to tell, during face-to-face interaction at least, whether someone is being sincere or sinister. It's sad that some people can't always see it that way.

MARK SHIPP

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Safer, sensible cycling on A449 please!

I DROVE north up the A449 on Friday afternoon and signalled to turn right into Holbeche House.

I waited until there was a gap in the traffic from Himley traffic lights and started to turn right into the site. I caught sight of a cyclist riding on the pavement coming in the same direction as me, so I stopped to let him past.

I waited for another gap in the traffic then started to turn again. This time I got a bit further across the road when two more cyclists appeared out of my blind spot going in the same direction as the first one, but much faster.

I had to stop half way across the path of the traffic now coming towards me, who also had to stop or they would have crashed into me. If I had carried on I would have crashed into the cyclists.

Why were three middle aged men cycling on the pavement at that time of day (14:30)?

Did they not realise that they could have been faced with a vehicle coming out of Holbeche? Why were they not on the road? Why were they riding so fast?

They could have easily met a pedestrian on the pavement coming out of Holbeche round the corner where they met me. Lack of common sense and foresight.

Motorists cannot be aware of cyclists if they cannot see them even if they are wearing high viz jackets.

MOLLIE BERRY
Stourbridge

Disgrace – disgusted at state of town centre

I WONDER, does anyone from Dudley Council ever bother to walk along High Street, Dudley, from Union Street up to Top Church?

If they did, I would hope they would be as disgusted as I am with the state of the place.

The post box on the corner is an absolute disgrace. Surely Royal Mail could be approached and asked for a clean-up.

The next eyesore is the pile of stuff outside the old McDonald's restaurant.

The amount of various goods stretches for several feet and is an absolute disgrace.

I could go on, but for goodness sake, someone please take a look at the area I am referring to and arrange for a clean-up.

MRS L SHELTON
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Chronicle Editorial,
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
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ipso for press freedom with responsibility

story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Make the bosses pay for Carillion failure

THE Government has a great chance to show that they are the rulers of the country – if they have the nerve.

Sack all of the senior managers and directors of Carillion, pay them up until the end of December 2017, freeze all bonus payments and pensions due, and ban them from working in the construction industry for life.

If they can, try to find a way to recoup some of the money that they have already been paid too.

Then pick and choose new directors and make sure that they work for us – the public.

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

We will lose our place at Euro table

WITH Brexit discussion proceeding at a pace the type of deal we are likely to get is more apparent.

The UK wants full access to the single market, for which we will have to pay a fee. We want to be part of the customs union, which might also incur a fee, in addition to which we must also be subject to the European courts of justice. We want close ties with financial institutions, technology and development, free movement of trade and personnel to suit our needs.

It seems to me that the best deal is so close to being full members of the EU that we might as well not bother leaving at all.

If we leave we will lose our voice in Europe, we will lose our rights to veto any policies we find are against our interests and we will no longer have access to EU funding or loans. Will we really be better off outside?

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It's a boy for tennis champion Jordanne

WORLD champion tennis player Jordanne Whiley MBE has given birth to a baby boy.

Her son Jackson Nigel McCarroll was delivered on Tuesday, January 30, at 3.30pm, weighing 7lb 13oz.

Jordanne, from Halesowen, has won ten tennis wheelchair titles, but has taken a break from the sport whilst expecting her first child.

The 25-year-old first announced she was pregnant in July, less than two weeks after winning her fourth doubles title at Wimbledon, alongside Japanese team mate Yui Kamiji.

Jordanne uploaded a photograph to her Instagram account announcing she had given birth, which featured a photograph of her partner Mark McCarroll, also a wheelchair tennis player, holding their son.

She wrote: "I am so proud to introduce you to our son Jackson Nigel McCarroll, born today at 15:30 weighing in at a healthy 7lb 13oz. I can't believe he's finally here. He's absolutely perfect."

Proud

Jordanne's parents Keith and Julie are delighted to be grandparents. Her father Keith, 69, who is also a former Paralympian, said: "We are really proud of Jordanne. Jordanne is completely over the moon. The baby looks a lot like Marc, which he is really happy about."

Jordanne was 11 weeks pregnant last year when she won the wheelchair women's doubles title at Wimbledon. It was the ninth grand slam doubles title show won. She has also won the Australian Open twice, the French Open twice and the US Open twice. She won the grand slam singles title at the US Open in 2015.



Jordanne's partner and coach Marc McCarroll holds their baby son Jackson and champion Jordanne is pictured enjoying her tennis success



Jordanne has also won a bronze medal at the 2012 and 2016 Paralympic Games. She was awarded her MBE in the 2015 Queens Birthday Honours. Jordanne was born with brittle bone disease, which her father Keith was also born with.

Her partner Marc, 32, who is also her coach, won the wheelchair British Open in 2014.

Marc, who was born to a family of athletes, used to play for Arsenal. But he was injured in a car accident in 2003 and took up wheelchair tennis two years later.

Jordanne's father revealed she has plans to get back into tennis. He said: "Jordanne is looking at whether she wants to get back to tennis. It will be a hard task but she will try."

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10 JLR's i54 plant biggest and busiest in UK

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, February 8, 2018

MORE than 300,000 petrol and diesel engines came off the production line at Jaguar Land Rover's factory on Wolverhampton's i54 site last year.

It makes the plant the biggest and busiest auto engine factory in the UK. The figures confirm JLR's standing as the biggest car maker and auto engine maker in the UK last year, according to industry body the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

The car company made 532,107 vehicles in the UK last year – the third year when it was the UK's number one car producer – while the Wolverhampton factory manufactured 305,907 of its Ingenium diesel and petrol engines.

Investment

It follows massive investment at the i54 site, where the £1 billion engine plant has now expanded to cover two million sq ft. The workforce at the site has now expanded beyond its original target of creating 1,400 jobs.

Jaguar Land Rover has maintained its position as the largest vehicle manufacturer in the UK despite a 2.3 per cent drop from record production highs seen in 2016 at its plants at Castle Bromwich, Solihull and Halewood on Merseyside. Meanwhile it is cutting car production at its Castle Bromwich factory, where it makes many of its Jaguar models.

Join race to Sway as rockers head back

MIDLANDS rockers Ocean Colour Scene will play a show at Wolverhampton Racecourse later this year.

The Birmingham band, which enjoyed huge success in the 1990s, will play a summer gig at the racecourse on August 31. The band had hits with The Riverboat Song, Sway and The Day We Caught the Train. Tickets cost £29.

More police stations in the Black Country could close

Take-off for air show helicopter



An assortment of ex-Royal Air Force helicopters which will be on display for the centenary event

ORGANISERS of the RAF Cosford Air Show have announced an assortment of ex-Royal Air Force helicopters which will be on display for the centenary event in June.

One of the flying highlights will be the world's only airworthy Bristol 171 Sycamore, making its first appearance at a UK flying display since its restoration to top condition by the Flying Bulls, based in Austria.

The Sycamore was the first Brit-

ish-designed helicopter to enter production and served with the Royal Air Force between 1953 and 1972 in a number of roles, including VIP transportation.

Other ex-RAF helicopters appearing in the flying display include the yellow Westland Whirlwind, performing a search-and-rescue display, and the Gazelle Squadron, who will perform a synchronised aerial ballet in their two Westland Gazelle helicopters.

On the ground, a number of helicopters will be parked together as part of the unique RAF100 static exhibition including a Sea King, Wessex and Whirlwind.

Peter Reoch, air show operations manager, said: "Showcasing the world's only airworthy examples of the Whirlwind and Sycamore helicopters is really exciting for us."

The show is on Sunday, June 10. Tickets cost £25.

WEST Midlands Police is to close more police stations under plans which will see officers work out of fire stations and council offices. Dozens of police stations have shut in the past three years but Chief Constable Dave Thompson said there is scope to close even more.

However he insists the level of police bases open to the public will remain the same. A pilot on the proposal has already started with Old Hill Police Station in Cradley Heath closing and officers moving to Hadens Cross Fire Station, half a mile away.

It comes as the police force must find savings of £22 million over the next year while battling against a 14 per cent rise in recorded crime in the West Midlands last year including a 22 per cent increase in murders.

There are 23 police bases in the Black Country, eight in Dudley and five in each of Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell – with only some still open to the public.

Policing

The Black Country has lost more than a dozen police bases in the last two years as part of £8.6m cuts.

Mr Thompson said: "We certainly don't need as many police stations to work out of at the moment and so we will, in the next few weeks, be beginning to talk about how many of our local neighbourhood teams could be based with another agency."

In 2016 Wolverhampton saw closures to stations at Heath Town, Graisle, Oxley, Pennwood Court and Staveley House – the latter in Whitmore Reans has recently been earmarked as a prayer hall.

In the same year Walsall Police Station in Green Lane closed after serving the town for around half a century.

Literature festival best attendance

A RECORD number of people attended this year's Wolverhampton Literature Festival, meaning it is set to return next year.

More than 6,200 people took part in almost 100 events across more than two dozen venues. Events included children's storytelling, workshops, theatre and performance, literature, poetry reading, music and art talks.

The three-day festival, which ran from January 26 to 28, saw award-winning writer and journalist Will Self headline the celebrations.

A total of 98 events took place across 26 venues during the event, which saw a major increase in attendance compared to 2,000 who visited last year's inaugural festival.

The festival was made possible after the council teamed up with the University of Wolverhampton and the Express & Star. It was funded by an Arts Council England grant.

“With my story I want to inspire people who are in an abyss because of their teeth. I looked for help from the Denture Clinic and it's been a journey full of professionalism, kindness and thanks go to everyone who played their part in restoring my smile and ability to enjoy life again.”

ATTRACTIVE, bubbly, confident and with a contagious laugh – there are simply not enough descriptive words to capture in a single sentence the experience of meeting professional chef, Jacky Standish.

Looking younger than her 57 years, Jacky has engaged on an unusual “bucket list”, though she’s quick to point out: “I’m definitely not dying. Quite the opposite!”

For the dog-lover, who confesses “she doesn’t know who to smile at first,” the list all about making up for lost time.

It’s hard to imagine, this woman who laughs easily and is generous with her smiles, would ever want for anything, but reflecting on recent years she admits “there’s plenty of catching up to be done.”

Relaxing over a coffee, the former chef and house manager to Hagley Hall’s Lord and Lady Cobham, explains that enduring decades of teeth troubles left her battling with some very dark days before receiving

implant treatment at North Street Dental and Implant Clinic in Dudley.

“I was deeply ashamed of my teeth. I could cook fabulous meals for the rich and famous who regularly visited the hall. But for my own pleasure with food, it was becoming a nightmare as I found it more and

more difficult to eat the meals I prepared.

“My bucket list . . . all the places I want to eat out,” she muses, “and I just might cook at home and throw a dinner party . . . that sounds terribly old fashioned, doesn’t it,” she adds.

“I always used to find meals out with family and friends quite daunting and felt my presence compromised those with whom I was out. Of course, they’d have to find a restaurant with a menu offering something I could chew,” Jacky says.

Jacky, suffered with periodontal (gum) disease for decades. “I was informed by my family dentist I would experience dental issues throughout my life.

“At one point I was attending the den-

Can't stop smiling!

How chef to rich and famous found ‘ingredients’ for a new life



visit www.denture-clinic.co.uk and follow the link to view Jacky's ‘reveal’ videos

A transformed Jacqueline showing off her beautifully crafted new smile with her pre-treatment look inset

tists every three months to try and control the problems, but no matter how I tried, as the years passed I lost more and more teeth,” she recalls.

Jacky’s confidence plummeted so badly she would walk her dog at 5am to avoid meeting people. “By my mid-50s the erosion on my confidence was as severe as the erosion on my gums,” she says,

Now, with four implants retaining an upper overdenture and a partial lower traditional prosthetic, she’s thrilled with her

new smile. “No-one would ever know they are not my natural teeth. Out with my dog, I can now speak to people and ask ‘what sort of dog have you got on your lead?’”

Now look at me!

Jacky, who recently renovated her newly-purchased bungalow, adds: “Everything was finished except a makeover of the front garden. I could have paid to have it done, but decided to invest in my teeth. It was no good having a front garden when

you have no front teeth.” The surgery was carried out by North Street’s implant dentist Owain Rees BDS DGDG (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576.

Summing up her experience Jacky concluded: “I wake up feeling remarkably good, my jaw sore from all the smiling. I came for an initial consultation with Steven [practice principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS Eng GDC 108353] and I could hardly lift my head up.

“Now look at me!”

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Malvern Joggers at the Stourbridge Stagger, Mary Stevens Park

Run hailed another staggering success

HUNDREDS of runners braved muddy conditions in a gruelling 10-mile event.

Around 500 people took part in the Stourbridge Stagger race on Sunday, tackling the 'multi-terrain' course. Those leading the event said the day had been a 'success' and plans were already in the pipeline for it to return next year.

Race director Ian Clarke said: "It was a success. The course was testing and there was some tight racing at the front. People come back year after year to do it. I think they just like the course. If the marshals are friendly and encouraging the runners appreciate that."

Mr Clarke said the £10 charge for the event was not to make profit. He added: "It is peanuts really. We do it because we want to give something back to the sport. It will be back next year."

See more pictures online at expressandstar.com

Arrest over death of long-serving ambulance worker in a collision

A MOTORIST has been arrested after an ambulance worker was killed in a crash at a busy junction in Wyre Forest.

Tributes have been paid to Gavin Hunt, aged 52, who was in the ambulance service for more than 20 years.

The technician was travelling with his wife on the A456 near Kidderminster at around 7.20pm on Friday when his Perodua Nippa car was involved in a smash with a Lexus, where the A road met the B4202. His wife survived and was in a stable condition in hospital.

A 45-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving and has been released as police investigations continue.

Mr Hunt joined Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service in 1997 and joined front-line operations three years later.

He never had a day off sick and was due to be presented with his 20-year medal at an awards ceremony in March.

West Midlands Ambulance Service chief executive Anthony Marsh paid a glowing tribute to Mr Hunt, who was based at Kidderminster.

He said: "Gavin was truly dedicated to the ambulance service and has helped thousands of patients during his career."

"I saw first hand not only how deeply upset staff were at the scene but also how incredibly hard and professionally they worked with police and fire colleagues."

£100m in a loan fund for firms hit by Carillion

Report by Simon Penfold

CONTRACTORS hit by the collapse of Wolverhampton-based construction and support services giant Carillion will be able to apply for Government-backed loans as part of a £100 million support package.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said the British Business Bank will support high street lenders to give loans to small and medium-sized businesses and individuals owed money by Carillion. Three high street banks have agreed to provide support worth almost £250m.

Mr Clark said: "We want to signal very clearly to small and medium-sized businesses who were owed money by Carillion that they will be supported to continue trading. The banks have responded to my request by agreeing to support businesses and individuals affected."

Mr Clark's department said the latest round of support will be of benefit to small businesses including the chain of subcontractors to Carillion. The Government has set up a task force involving business and unions to support firms and workers affected by the collapse of Carillion.

Its liquidation left in its wake a £900m debt pile, a £590m pension deficit and hundreds of millions of pounds in unfinished public contracts. It comes after more than 2,600 construction companies became insolvent in the last financial year, with more facing problems because of the collapse of Carillion, according to a new report.

Over the past week it has been announced that 820 staff would be made redundant with 919 other Carillion jobs saved as others took on their contracts.

Dudley people affected by the firm's collapse have been urged to call into drop-in sessions at three neighbourhood centres for advice. Staff will be on hand at Castle & Priory Neighbourhood Learning Centre in Limes Road, Dudley, from 9am to midday every Monday. They will be at Brierley Hill Neighbourhood Learning Centre in Hill Street, Brierley Hill, from 1pm to 4pm every Wednesday. Staff will also be at Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Centre in Dudley Wood Road, Dudley, every Friday from 9am to noon.

People can also contact the team by calling 01384 818143 or 07799 070974, or emailing adultlearning.dachs@dudley.gov.uk

Grilled

Meanwhile, former Carillion boss Keith Cochrane was among a string of executives being grilled by MPs on Tuesday. The former head of defunct construction giant has admitted he should have acted sooner before its collapse.

Mr Cochrane, who is among a string of executives being grilled by MPs, claimed all the decisions he took were in the best interests of the company. But he added: "Clearly the business did have issues – undoubtedly. And clearly, do I wish we had done something about it sooner? Absolutely. I recognise that."

"I can assure you that all the decisions I took in seeking to do the best thing for the business at that juncture."

Former finance chief Zafar Khan denied being 'asleep at the wheel' and expressed his surprise over the firm's liquidation.

"No, I don't believe I was asleep at the wheel because as soon as I came into the role, we were looking to tackle the issues and the key focus of my time in the role was to bring net debt down," he said. "I believe I did everything that I could have done, essentially. I was surprised at the outcome that eventually came to pass."

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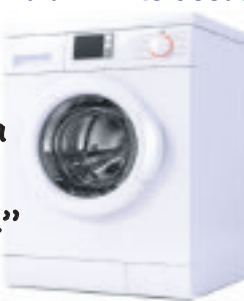
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Duncan Edwards and Bobby Charlton in the Nesscliffe team of 1957, with Brian Griffiths, front row, centre

I was team-mate of legend Duncan

IT was a tackle he wasn't going to forget in a hurry. When Derek Thorpe's army football team took on their neighbouring regiment, his sergeant-major warned their opponents had one or two tasty players in their side.

Early in the game, the nippy young winger found himself dispossessed by a strapping defender playing for the other side, and decided to pay him back.

"He tackled me early on, and I thought 'I'll have you next time'," recalls Derek, now 81. "I landed about two yards further up the pitch than I did the first time."

That player was Duncan Edwards. By the time he turned out for the Royal Army Ordnance Corps team, based in Nesscliffe, near Shrewsbury, he already had three England caps under his belt, and Derek remembers being in awe of the power, skill and speed of the great man.

"Him and Bobby Charlton were both in the same team, and they really stood out," he said. "I thought Duncan Edwards was better than Bobby Charlton, and I later read that Bobby also thought he was."

While Charlton would go on to taste World Cup success and enjoy a long, glittering career, Edwards' life would tragically be cut short as a result of the Munich air crash.

Refuel

It is 60 years this week since the disaster tore apart Matt Busby's legendary 'Busby Babes' Manchester United team which had blazed a trail for English football in the newly formed UEFA Cup. On February 6 1958, the chartered British European Airways plane had stopped in Germany to refuel, and crashed as it attempted to take off for its final leg of the journey.

Of the 44 people on board, 23 were killed. Charlton was one of the survivors. Edwards was one of eight United team members who died from injuries sustained during the crash.

"They were such great lads," added Derek. "Duncan was from Dudley, and I was from Dawley, so the lingo was pretty similar. After he had knocked me flying with his tackle, he came over to me, and said 'you all right, kid?'"

Derek, who was a regular with the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) at Copthorne Barracks, says he would regularly play against the Manchester United stars during their National Service in the mid-1950s.

"Because they were just up the road, we would play each other a lot," he said. But Derek recalls the games were often one-sided affairs, with the KSLI lads beating the Nesscliffe team on just one occasion, adding: "They were a cut above the rest," he added.

Also in that team was Brian Griffiths, a full back for Shrewsbury Town. Like many professional footballers from the Midlands, he was posted to Nesscliffe for his National Service so he could continue to keep playing for his club. "Duncan was already there," said Brian, aged 83. "He was a cor-



The aftermath of the plane crash on the Munich runway 60 years ago



Busby Babe Duncan Edwards



Nesscliffe team-mate Brian Griffiths



Rose Cook-Monk and Dudley North MP Ian Austin with the book of remembrance

poral. He was a smashing lad. He was not aggressive, and his football capabilities were just unbelievable."

Brian says he wife Iris stayed in touch with Edwards' mother Sarah-Anne after the star's death, adding: "She was very proud of him."

To commemorate the disaster, a book of remembrance has been handed over in the German city. It has been presented to the minister of the Church of St Peter near Manchesterplatz, a street near the airport named in honour of the club. It is now on

public display there. Rose Cook-Monk, who has made a film about Duncan's life, visited the scene of the tragedy and witnessed the opening of a memorial garden on the airfield, which is now disused.

She said: "It was emotional to be there and see the departure lounge they all left from," she said. "I didn't want to come out without Dudley being mentioned so myself and the Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler came up with the idea of the people of Dudley remembering Duncan."



COMPETITION

All aboard for a Peppa Pig fun journey

PEPPA PIG and her friends are back in a new live show Peppa Pig's Adventure, featuring a new story, lots of songs and heaps of fun!

Join Peppa as she gets ready to go on an exciting camping trip to the woods with George and her school friends, including Pedro Pony, Suzy Sheep and Gerald Giraffe.

With lunchboxes packed and Daddy Pig driving the bus, Peppa and her friends are excited about their outdoor adventure, full of games, laughter and live music!

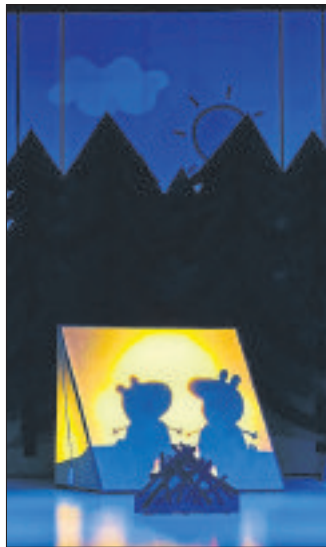
The happy campers soon settle down to sleep and listen to the gentle pitter patter of rain. Safe and warm inside their tents the excited group can look forward to morning time, when there will be lots of muddy puddles to play in.

The show is coming to a theatre near you and Chronicle readers have the chance to win a family ticket, with seven up for grabs. The show is due to stop off at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on Saturday, April 7 and Sunday, April 8.

Richard Lewis once again takes the helm for this new live stage adaptation of eOne's animated TV series which he directs and has adapted for the theatre.

He has also adapted and directed the four previous Peppa Pig live stage shows, Peppa Pig's Party, Peppa Pig's Treasure Hunt, Peppa Pig's Big Splash and Peppa Pig's Surprise.

The show features music from BAFTA award-winning composer Mani Svarsson. Audiences will enjoy interactive fun, songs and games



HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning a family ticket simply answer the following question.

Who is driving the bus?

Send your entry to Peppa Pig Competition, Chronicle editorial department, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES, with your name, address and contact number. Usual rules apply. Closing date: Thursday, February 15.

Tickets are subject to availability. Transport is not included. Tickets are non-transferable. A family ticket may not exceed people and must include at least one adult.

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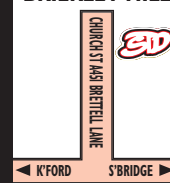
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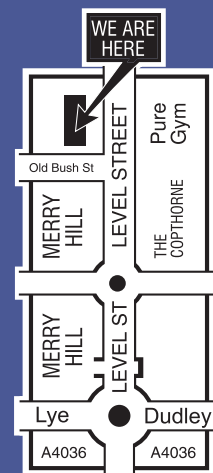
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Bring Parliament to Midlands, says MP

A BLACK Country MP has called for Parliament to be brought to the West Midlands.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin has backed calls to move Parliament out of London – to ‘force the metropolitan elite’ to find out what life is like outside of the capital.

The Labour MP called for an example to be set by moving the MPs and Lords out of London.

Mr Austin said: “Parliament badly needs refurbishment and unlike other countries we’ve got government, Parliament, business, finance and the media all concentrated in London, so let’s set an example and move Parliament to the West Midlands in the middle of the country.”

“I think that would take pressure off London’s overheated economy and imagine how moving government to the regions could help bring new investment and new jobs to areas like the Midlands.

“Most important of all, it would force the metropolitan elite ruining the government and the civil service to listen to the rest of us and find out what life is like outside London.”

Mr Austin has previously moved a Parliamentary Bill proposing to move 100,000 civil services jobs from London to the regions.

Artist Corran adds colour to comedy



Artist and designer Corran Green from Kingswinford

ARTIST Corran Green has made a colourful splash on stage with her unique scenery designs.

The 19-year-old from Kingswinford was asked to produce the backdrops for the Fizzog comedy group’s production of The Wicked Wizard of Fizzog.

Her distinctive artwork provides a vivid addition to the successful show whichon tour around the Midlands.

Corran initially became involved with the Black Country production company through a drama workshop in Stourbridge but eventually chose art and design ahead of stage performances.

She said: “I took part in some of the Fizzog shows and my main claim to fame was when I appeared as the front end of a cow.

“It was such great fun working with them. Producing the scenery was a challenge but I tried to create something which reflected their off-beat way of presenting their show.

“Art is my main passion. With my best friend Ryan Suzuki, we are developing our own brand of T-shirts and prints and I am also working on other commissions.”

Mall’s new room for disabled shoppers

A NEW Changing Places room has been opened at the intu Merry Hill shopping centre. It means people with severe disabilities can now utilise the new assisted-access toilet and changing facilities installed at the Brierley Hill centre

The room is intended for shoppers with profound and multiple disabilities but will also cater for people with other physical and non-visual disabilities who require extra equipment and space in a safe and comfortable environment. It differs to intu Merry Hill’s standard and accessible toilets with features that include an adult-sized changing bench and features enough room to accommodate a disabled person and up to two carers. In addition there is also a height adjustable sink and a hoist to help users out of their wheelchairs.

Changing Places on the upper mall near Debenhams was officially opened by Neil Davies, chairman at Dudley Voices for Choice.

Shock figures for children carrying blades at school

SWORDS, axes and machetes are among the 260 weapons seized in schools by West Midlands Police.

Shocking figures show how many blades were picked up from schools over the past six years.

In Wolverhampton, 25 were taken by police, 20 in Walsall, 21 in Sandwell and 14 in Dudley. These include flick

knives, machetes and daggers. The children caught with weapons include three 10-year-olds.

The data obtained by the Liberal Democrats shows the range of reported crimes from schools. They include malicious wounding and even an attempted murder.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said he was concerned some young people were carrying knives as a form

of protection. He said an education programme, involving schools and youth clubs, needed to be rolled out.

Liberal Democrats campaigner Rob Quarumby said: “No child should be walking down the corridor of a school with a blade in their pocket. These kids are robbing knives from mum’s kitchen drawer or a screwdriver from dad’s tool shed that could, potentially, take a life.”

Street hits the roads to back charity run

WEST Midlands Mayor Andy Street will be hitting the roads after signing up to a 10k charity run. Mr Street will take part in the Black Country Road Run in and around Halesowen on July 1.

He said: “I am very much looking forward to taking part in this event. Not only will it be a great event for runners but will also raise money for many good causes in the Black Country and beyond.”

Corin Crane, chief executive of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, added: “It is great to see the Mayor stepping up and taking on this mission for charity. I would encourage local businesses to get involved in the new Corporate Challenge.”

See theblackcountryrun.com website for details.

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Personal choice is the key to good design

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



YEARS ago, many people were apparently convinced that every item of furniture in their homes had to be in keeping with the age of their property – Victorian pieces for Victorian houses and so on and definitely nothing vintage for a modern room!

Thankfully, our thinking has changed to become both more realistic and more creative in terms of interior design, with most of us happy to 'mix and match'.

However, the design gurus seem to be taking this a step further just at the moment, advising us to buy only pieces that we actually like personally, rather than items that just fit in with the general home decor.

This is really good news all round, because we've been telling people for ages to buy vintage items they actually like as opposed to pieces they think they should have!

And funnily enough, if you do this you will almost certainly find that this diverse approach works perfectly, everything will go together just fine.

One man recently bought from us a vintage chair that had been re-upholstered in brightly coloured stripes – his wife looked a bit dubious when she picked it up from the saleroom but the verdict reported back later was that it 'made their sitting room'.

Many vintage items make great central features or

serve as 'statement pieces', lovely old Chesterfield sofas or chairs (providing you have room), Welsh dressers (again, not for a small house), an Edwardian chaise or even something unusual like a rocking horse or an old sleigh.



Vintage furniture sits very easily alongside modern items, an old farmhouse table looks great in a contemporary kitchen and an antique French walnut bed is perfect for a modern bedroom.

The key is that you personally have chosen pieces that you like and feel comfortable around rather than being a slave to design 'guidelines'.

Of course, you need to get the balance right, don't buy a huge piece of furniture that will dwarf everything else and limit space or go completely mad with the colours but generally speaking if you like it go for it and it will look great.

Perry and Phillips hold sales of antiques and collectables at the Mill Street saleroom, Low Town, Bridgnorth on the first Tuesday of every other month. Viewing is during the weekend and on the Monday prior to the sale and catalogues are available from the saleroom or online at www.perryandphillips.co.uk website. Newcomers to the auction should arrive in plenty of time to register and be allocated a bidding number and bids may be made (by prior arrangement) over the phone or left with the auctioneer. Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.

Recycled clothes are put to good use elsewhere



Unwanted clothes are big business

A FEW years ago I took two bin bags of clothing to a Cash for Clothes outlet.

I queued behind several people with bulging black bags of unwanted garments and watched as the staff checked through every item to ensure it met the strict criteria.

I was fascinated by the quality of the garments being recycled, designer dresses, expensive knitwear, beautiful leather handbags and unworn shoes.

They received less than £10 each (45p per kilogram) after waiting 30 minutes or more to be seen.

The clothes are sent abroad where they get a new lease of life and are worn again, often sold on markets in poorer countries of the world.

Bad quality product is often turned into insulation or the fabric processed into other product.

Half of the clothes in Tunisia for instance are second hand.

The sorting of garments is labour intensive, machinery cannot grade fabrics and clothing.

Bras and football shirts are sold for the highest prices but the clothing recycling busi-

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



ness is reducing as other countries no longer want our cast offs and the quality of high street clothing gets worse meaning they are graded into lower value pre worn garments that are more likely incinerated.

However, this does create energy that can heat and power our homes.

Panipat in northern India is known as the "cast off capital" and strips trimming from "mutilated" clothing and after sorting into colours the shredded rags are fed into machines that begin to spin it into new yarn.

Designers upcycle the trimmings and fabrics and vintage clothes shops import branded product from the recycling plants back into Europe to sell at higher prices.

It is estimated we have more than £3 billion worth of clothing sat in our wardrobes, unloved and unworn.

We buy often and wear things only once.



Raw spinach is a good source of folic acid



Pregnant women are not the only people who can benefit from extra folic acid in their diets

Should we fortify flour to prevent birth defects?

SENIOR figures in the Scottish and Welsh governments want there to be a compulsory fortification in flour.

Now Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt is being urged to make it compulsory for flour to contain folic acid, as research shows the vitamin can help prevent birth defects.

Folic acid is the synthetic form of folate (a type of B vitamin). Natural folate is found in foods, whereas folic acid is used as a fortification.

So why could getting more folic acid into your diet be beneficial, and how can you do it?

What are the benefits of folic acid? Food Standards Scotland has already said there is clear evidence that fortification flour could help prevent birth defects such as spina bifida, as well as neural tube defects in unborn babies.

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service has backed this call for flour to have folic acid added to it, saying it could reduce the number of much-wanted pregnancies that are terminated due to neural tube defects.

Pregnant women aren't the only people who stand to benefit from getting more folic

By Prudence Wade

acid in their diets – research also shows that it can protect against bowel cancer and heart disease.

Are women getting enough folic acid in their diets?

In short: No. 81% of women in Scotland of childbearing age and 79% of such females in Wales are not getting the recommended amount of folic acid – higher than the 75% recorded for women across the UK.

The daily recommended allowance of folate from the British Dietetic Association is 200 micrograms – and significantly more for women who are hoping to conceive or are already pregnant.

How can you get more folic acid in your diet?

The Department of Health has said it's reviewing the research and will respond to the calls to make fortification mandatory in due course.

So for now, it's unclear whether it will be made compulsory for flour to contain folic acid, but there are still ways that you can increase your intake of the micronutrient. Breakfast is an easy meal in which to up your folic acid intake. Keep an eye out

for breakfast cereals like Kellogg's Corn Flakes – which are fortified with folic acid – and accompany it with orange juice (where the B vitamin naturally occurs).

What if you don't like cereals?

If cereal isn't your thing, have a slice of wholemeal bread (which is fortified) and slather on some Marmite.

There are also many ways to incorporate more folate-rich foods into other meals. Dark, leafy greens are excellent sources of folic acid – think spinach, kale, broccoli and cabbage, which you can add to salads or as sides to your main meal.

To put this into perspective, half a cup of cooked spinach contains 131 micrograms of folate. You should be careful not to overcook vegetables, because this destroys the folates. Instead, steam or eat them raw to get the most out of the B vitamins.

Beans, peas and lentils are also great sources – a small bowl of lentils will contribute towards most of your daily folate needs.

For snacks, look to citrus fruits or nuts (particularly sunflower seeds, peanuts and almonds).

Finally, if you are still struggling to get enough in your diet, you should consider a supplement.



Salads are a good sources of folates



A sea of scarves at The Hawthorns Picture: AMA/Adam Fradgley

Sea of scarves honours hero Cyrille as the fans pay tribute

THE Hawthorns rose for its hero as West Brom supporters honoured Cyrille Regis on Saturday.

A sea of scarves were held aloft as the icon's name was sung loud and proud to mark the passing of one of Albion's most-loved sons ahead of the Premier League match against Southampton. Fans of both clubs were encouraged to bring scarves and were asked to 'Raise them for Cyrille' during a special video tribute before kick-off.

Broadcaster and Albion fan Adrian Chiles hosted an hour-long pre-match show with a host of famous faces from across the football community on hand to pay their respects.

A minute's applause also took place prior to kick-off inside a packed Hawthorns. Video clips dedicated to Cyrille were screened.

Among those to also pay their respects was well-known fan, comic Frank Skinner. He told the crowd:

"They say he picked up the ball on the half-way line, in my memory he picked up the ball on Smethwick High Street."

Ron Atkinson, Viv Anderson, Martyn Bennett, Derek Statham, Rod Wallace, Ally Brown, Len Cantello, Brendon Batson, Ally Robertson, John Wile, Bob Hazell, Andy Cole, Dion Dublin, John Trewick, Tony Godden, Ian Wright, Tony Brown and Bryan Robson were among those paying tribute.

Peaky Blinders night 17 is a sell-out success

TICKETS for a hugely popular Peaky Blinders night at the Black Country Living Museum were snapped up in just three hours.

The event will return to the Tipton Road museum, where much of the popular gangster TV drama is filmed, in September after going down a storm with the show's many fans.

Visitors will again dress in classic Peaky Blinders style, with flat caps and waistcoats for the men and 1920s flapper outfits for the ladies.

Tickets for two shows in September sold out just three hours after going on sale, last week.

There will also be a special Get Closer event in September, where fans will be given a tour of the familiar Peaky Blinders locations at the museum, and that has also sold out.

Crime rising, but officer numbers are to decrease

Report by Alex Ross

POLICE officer numbers will continue to fall in the West Midlands despite an increase in crime.

The West Midlands force is also set to increase its council tax precept.

The force currently has 6,535 officers and it aims to protect around 100 roles by increasing the policing precept – adding an extra £12 a year to Band D council tax bills for 2018/19.

But this will not be enough to avoid a fall in numbers, with around 6,400 expected to be in place this time next year due to shortfall in funding.

It comes as figures last month showed an increase in recorded crime for the West Midlands, up 14 per cent. West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "These figures highlight the short-sighted approach of the Government by continuing to apply real-terms cuts to police forces' funding at a time when the pressures on policing are increasing."

"As the funding West Midlands Police receives from the Government is going down in real-terms, I have been left with no other option than to consider increasing the council tax precept for policing by £12 a year for a Band D property."

Protecting

Mr Jamieson said money raised from the precept would go 'directly on protecting officer numbers', and neighbourhood policing to reduce crime.

He added: "The West Midlands Police has lost £145 million from central Government since 2010. Despite being a highly efficient force, we have still lost 2,000 officers since 2010, meaning we are having to do more with fewer resources."

"Despite the challenges faced, we are determined to get on with the job of keeping the people of the West Midlands safe."

Meanwhile, hundreds of suspected drink and drug drivers were caught during the Christmas period, as police cracked down hard on reckless motorists.

Officers from West Midlands Police and the Central Motorway Police Group arrested 251 drivers for being over the alcohol limit during December, and 40 for being under the influence of drugs.

The highest alcohol recording was 184 micrograms in 100 millilitres of breath, more than five times the legal limit.

Extra free parking is proposed in borough

MOTORISTS are set to get two hours free parking in town centres across Dudley.

One hour free parking is currently available in all council-owned car parks, but council bosses want to increase that to two hours under new plans.

The move is set to be determined by council bosses at a cabinet meeting later this month.

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley said: "This has been on our wish list for a long time as we recognise how important this is to people visiting our town centres."

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "People will be able to shop for free for longer which is good news for them and for our traders."



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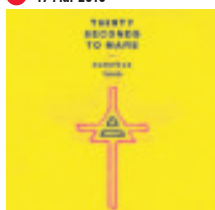
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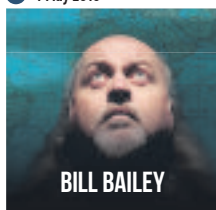
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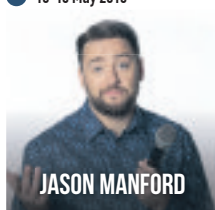
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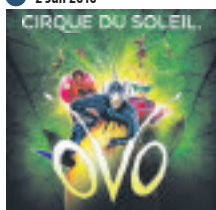
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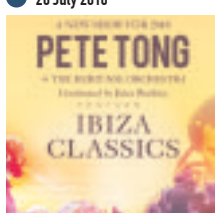
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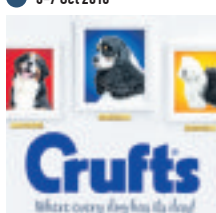
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The fairytale where the ogre is a hero

Ninety minutes. Every day. That's how long make-up artists take to transform Mid-Wales actor Steffan Harri into the nation's favourite ogre – Shrek.

The show is back on the road for an extended run, including shows at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from February 14 to 25.

The performances follow a record-breaking UK and Ireland Tour, during which it earned rave reviews.

Shrek the Musical is based on the story and characters from the Oscar®-winning DreamWorks Animation film.

The hilarious and spectacular production turns the world of fairytales upside down in an all-singing, all-dancing, must-see musical comedy.

Shrek and his loyal steed Donkey set off on a quest to rescue the beautiful Princess Fiona (Laura Main) from her tower, guarded by a fire breathing love-sick dragon.

The fun gets serious with the vertically challenged Lord Farquaad, a gang of fairytale misfits, and a biscuit with attitude, creating an irresistible mix of adventure, laughter and romance that is guaranteed to delight audiences of all ages.

Steffan loves it: "I was over the moon to be given the part. I toured with Shrek and was an understudy to Lord Farquaad. When I got the call to do the lead role this time, I was playing in Les Miserables. It doesn't get much different from that to this. But I jumped at the opportunity. I was keen not to go back to the part of Farquaad because I'd done that. I thought it would be good to have a go at Shrek this time and a few auditions later they gave me the job. I was over the moon."

He laughs when he remembers how he learned he was going to take the starring role. He was at work and it was about 7pm, half an hour before he was due on stage in Les Miserables in the West End. "It was incredible. I went on stage still buzzing from the news. That show was a bit of a whirlwind. But I do love Shrek the Musical. Not only is the music absolutely brilliant and a pleasure to sing every night, the show also has a book that is so funny and witty."

In some respects, Shrek is like a pantomime. It's designed equally with parents and children in mind – with some gags going over the kids' heads and causing mirth among their parents.

"You're right. It's not just for the kids it's for the adults as well. The dads who are dragged for the Saturday matinee come out laughing because of the Lord Farquaad material. The kids don't really get that."

Steffan is well-versed in the original 2001 Shrek movie, having enjoyed the best-selling computer-animated fantasy based on William Steig's 1990 fairy tale picture book of the same name. He enjoyed the voice overs from Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, Cameron Diaz and John Lithgow – not forgetting the equally enjoyable sequels.

"I'm 26 now so I was about 10 when it came out. I remember quite vividly going to the Welshpool Solar Cinema to watch it. When I got the job, I went back to watch the film. It really is brilliant." Shrek is a real feather in Steffan's cap.

Some day my prince will come –
Shrek and Princess Fiona



After all, he's still only 26 and is already leading the line in major touring productions. He learned his trade in a quite backwater, Caereinion, in Mid-Wales, near Welshpool.

"They didn't offer drama at Caereinion High School so I looked elsewhere and Theatr Maldwyn came about in year 7-8. I learned a lot from the three teachers there and that helped me massively. That made me look elsewhere and that's when I decided to do drama and gained a place at the Guildford School of Acting. It was a fantastic school and I had the best three years there learning some fantastic skills. Now I'm out working – and that's when the real learning starts."

Steffan is thoroughly enjoying his career. He's striking out, making a name for himself and taking up opportunities that come his way. "It's great and there's such variety – literally, from Les Miserables to Shrek."

"This part is totally different to everything I've ever done before. I have a 90-minute make-up call every day so that I can be fully transformed with prosthetics. After that, I have to put on the costume

The dads who are dragged for the Saturday matinee come out laughing

and that weighs an additional 45lbs." Once all that is done, he's transformed and ready to play the ogre. He has created his own interpretation of Shrek from scratch, putting his own stamp on it.

"It's unusual to go out when you're so heavily made up. After the show, I go out of the stage door onto the street and pass people who've seen the show and they have no idea that it was me. But the anonymity doesn't mean I don't connect with Shrek – I do. OK, so Lord Farquaad steals a few scenes, but Shrek is completely believable. He has to be."

Life is moving quickly for Steffan and he's looking forward to starring at a major theatre in Birmingham so early into his career.

"I never thought I'd be leading a show at the age of 26. It's a great honour and I've very fortunate to them for giving me the opportunity. But there's a lot more that I'd like to do. I'd love to do straight drama and TV as well. I've done a bit of TV back in Wales on S4C and I would love doing more and see where it takes me. I'd like to work again in London again too. Working and being happy and healthy is as much as I can ask for and I'm very grateful that I have these opportunities."

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



Inheaven – turbocharged riffs



Indie rock fans will be Inheaven for arts centre gig

SOUTH London indie rockers Inheaven bring their turbocharged riffs to Wolverhampton's Newhampton Arts Centre (NAC) on Tuesday.

The quartet built around the instant hooks and striking vocals of guitarist James Taylor and bassist Chloe Little were snapped up by the Cult Records label, run by The Strokes' Julian Casablancas.

Their self-titled debut album was released last September including the single Regeneration. The

band have since released an acoustic EP and a new track for the new year, Sweet Dreams Baby.

There's another major indie rock night at the NAC, on Dunkley Street, next Friday, February 16, when one of Birmingham's top bands, JAWS, top a triple bill also featuring Synthetic Recipe and Tinned Astronaut.

Gigs tonight (Thursday) include Nightmares on Wax at the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath in support of new album Shape The Future, and satirical rockers Half Man Half Biscuit with The Humdrum Express at the Robin 2 in Bilston.

Got those cigar box guitar blues



Smethwick guitar maker and musician John Wormald – aka Chickenbone John, The Godfather of The Cigar Box Guitar – is back again with Boxstock, the UK Cigar Box Guitar Festival.

Following the success of last year's event at the Slade Rooms, the festival returns to the Wolverhampton venue for more homemade blues-busting guitar on Saturday.

In a time when money's too tight to mention, just like the old days, some hard-up musicians have gone

back to the traditional approach of literally making their own entertainment by making their own instruments.

Seasick Steve helped bring this humble instrument to worldwide attention. As he doesn't do many UK dates these days, here's an opportunity to catch some real roots music on your own doorstep.

Heading the bill are Blackriver Bluesman and Bad Mood Hudson, a heavy metal duo all the way from Finland. After being the success of last year's event, the festival has brought back the Dusk Brothers from Bristol and super-busker Bemuzic from Cambridge.

During the daytime Chickenbone John, pictured, will be leading workshops on how to make cigar box guitars and powerhouse one-man band Hollowbelly will be leading sessions on how to play the cigar box guitar.

During these daytime sessions there will also be plenty of traders selling their handmade instruments, plus open mic sessions for those who feel ready to perform.

It's also an ideal way to find out more about the alt-blues music scene.

Tickets for the evening gig are £14 but admission is free at the Slade Rooms from noon to 5.30pm.

Comedy nights with reality TV bridegroom

There's a funny week coming up with several top comedians in the area. Canadian stand-up Bobby Mair, as seen on Russell Howard's Good News and 8 Out Of 10 Cats, is at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms tomorrow night (Friday). Last year Bobby – apparently a distant cousin to Justin Beiber – featured on a reality TV show about his wedding to fellow comic Harriet Kemsley. Bobby And Harriet Get Married was shown on the Viceland channel. Bobby will be back in the region at Bromsgrove Artrix on February 17 and Birmingham Glee Club on March 9.

Next Thursday (Feb 15) Alun Cochrane is at the Slade Rooms. A TV regular, Alun is also co-host of The Frank Skinner Show on Absolute Radio. The master of puns and one-liners Milton Jones is at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham on Sunday.

Ballet is a beauty in the Russian style

The curse of a wicked fairy means a beautiful princess falls into an enchanted sleep which can only be broken by a prince's kiss. Enter the opulent world of Imperial Russia for one of the grandest ballets with a score by Tchaikovsky and choreography by Marius Petipa. The Sleeping Beauty is a highlight from the Birmingham Royal Ballet repertoire on a par with The Nutcracker. The Sleeping Beauty is at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday to Saturday, February 24.



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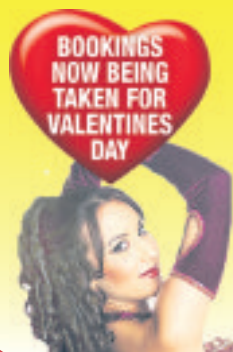


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CHOICE



Brenda Emmanus

Charles I's Treasures Reunited (BBC2, 9pm)
His merits as a monarch may have been called into question (to put it mildly), but Charles I did have an impressive eye for a painting, acquiring pieces by the finest artists of the past, including D , rer, Rubens, Titian and Holbein, and commissioning works from leading contemporary artists such as Van Dyck and Rubens. Following his execution in 1649, his collection was sold off by Cromwell and scattered across Europe. Charles II reclaimed some pieces, but others went on to be shown in museums across the world. Now for the first time since the 17th century, the key masterpieces have been reunited and are on display at the Royal Academy. Brenda Emmanus presents.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day one from PyeongChang, South Korea. **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Continued coverage of day one from PyeongChang, South Korea. **4.30** Final Score. **5.25** BBC News. **5.35** Regional Programme. **5.45** And They're Off for Sport Relief.

6.25 **Pointless Celebrities.** Sarah Millican, Gary Delaney, Jack Carroll, Terry Alderton, Lee Hurst, Arthur Smith, Helen Lederer and Cariad Lloyd take part in a comedy-themed edition of the unorthodox quiz show.

7.15 **All Together Now.** Rob Beckett hosts as more singers step on-stage for a chance to win a £50,000 cash prize, performing hits as varied as Sia's Chandelier, Oasis's Don't Look Back in Anger, and Whitney Houston's I Wanna Dance with Somebody. The judging panel takes the form of "The 100", a large collective of music experts and performers from all over the UK.

8.20 **Casualty.** The day of Blake's trial arrives, and Elle finds herself face-to-face with his victim, Miles, when he is rushed into the ED after collapsing at home.

9.10 **BBC News:** Weather.

9.30 **Hard Sun.** Grace Morrgan is apprehended by the police and brought in for questioning. Determined to keep themselves and their loved ones from harm's way, Hicks and Renko come up with a scheme that will turn Morrgan's government colleagues against her, but the veteran spook refuses to let herself be outmanoeuvred so easily. Meanwhile, a woman's car is found abandoned near a meadow, with what appears to be a suicide note left on the dashboard. Last in the series.

10.30 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Tottenham Hotspur v Arsenal and Manchester City v Leicester City.

11.50 **Live Winter Olympics 2018.** Radzi Chinyanganya presents coverage of the latest events on day two of the 23rd staging of the Games.

2.00 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Further coverage from PyeongChang, South Korea.

BBC2

6.00 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day one from PyeongChang, South Korea. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Everyday. (R) **12.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Continued coverage of day one from PyeongChang, South Korea. **1.15** The Hairy Bikers' Mediterranean Adventure. (R) **2.15** Escape to the Country. **3.00** Italy's Invisible Cities. (R) **4.00** Nigel Slater's Middle East. (R) **5.00** Dragons' Den. (R)

6.00 **Hugh's Wild West.** Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's tour of the West Country continues as he explores the Forest of Dean. He enlists the aid of local wildlife enthusiasts to track down imposing wild boar, which have returned to the area for the first time in 300 years. He also has a close encounter with a goshawk, a bird of prey that specialises in hunting in woodland, and one that has come to be known locally as "the phantom of the forest".

7.00 **Winter Olympics – Today at the Games.** Clare Balding presents highlights of the opening day's action from the 23rd staging of the Games, which takes place in PyeongChang, South Korea.

8.00 **Dad's Army.** A secret weapon goes haywire and threatens Walmington-on-Sea. (R)

8.30 **Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs.** Paul Merton explores lochs close to the Central Belt, starting on the banks of the Lake of Menteith and ending by climbing Ben Venue in the Trossachs. Last in the series.

9.00 **Charles I's Treasures Reunited.** Documentary detailing how the Royal Academy reunited works of art that once formed part of Charles I's substantial collection, but were sold off piecemeal following his execution.

10.00 **Film: The Young Victoria.** (2009) In the early years of the queen's reign, she is drawn into a power struggle and falls in love with her cousin and eventual husband. Period drama, with Emily Blunt and Rupert Friend.

11.35 **Film: Love Is All You Need.** (2012) A Danish woman recovering from treatment for cancer falls in love with the widowed father of her daughter's fiancée. Romantic drama, with Pierce Brosnan and Trine Dyrholm.

1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.30** BBC News.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister Six. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Do! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.20** Dancing on Ice. (R) **1.15** Regional Programme : Weather. **1.20** ITV News: Weather. **1.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v Italy (Kick-off 2.15pm). **4.20** Live Six Nations Rugby Union, England v Wales (Kick-off 4.45pm).

7.00 **Take Me Out.** Paddy McGuinness presents as more single men enter his "Love Lift" in the hope of impressing his panel of 30 unattached ladies. This time, Josh, a fitness fanatic from Woking, Dan, a volcanologist from Bristol, HR manager Martin from Sunderland, and Tai, an NHS worker from Birmingham will be hoping to find romance. Plus, a chance to catch up with last week's couples.

8.15 **The Voice UK.** Emma Willis ushers more would-be stars onto the stage, as the penultimate round of Blind Auditions arrives. Once again, the singers will be asked to perform in front of coaches Will.i.am, Olly Murs, Jennifer Hudson and Tom Jones, who all must appraise their skills with their backs to the performer. Only once they have decided to pledge their support are the coaches permitted to spin their chair around greet the singer in question.

9.45 **Through the Keyhole.** Keith Lemon challenges Jimmy Carr, Eamonn Holmes and Scarlett Moffatt to guess which celebrity homes he has infiltrated.

10.35 **ITV News:** Weather.

10.50 **Film: Lethal Weapon 2.** (1989) The detectives set their sights on a South African diplomat laundering drugs money via his embassy in the US. Action thriller sequel, with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover and Joss Ackland.

1.00 You've Been Framed! (R) **1.30** Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **6.45** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Coast vs Country. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun. (R) **4.30** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R) **5.35** The Supertv. (R)

6.30 **Channel 4 News.**

7.00 **Great Canal Journeys.** Timothy West and Prunella Scales return to Wales to explore a canal that has eluded them for more than half a century. The Monmouthshire and Brecon canal is cut off from the rest of Britain's network of waterways by the Black Mountains, and meanders its way through the tranquil Usk valley. Along the way the couple visit the old ironworks at Blaenavon, where children as young as five were once put to work, and lend a hand with some lock restoration work. They also explore the castle at Tretower – which is rumoured to be haunted. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 **Village of the Year Final with Penelope Keith.** The four remaining villages compete in the grand final, with residents of each community putting on a special event to showcase what makes their home special. Last in the series.

9.00 **Film: Die Hard 4.0.** (2007) Tough New York cop John McClane is sent to escort a computer hacker to Washington for questioning. During this routine operation he stumbles on a criminal mastermind's plan to launch a technological terrorist attack on the US, and is forced to enlist the hacker's aid in foiling the evil scheme. Action thriller sequel, with Bruce Willis, Timothy Olyphant, Justin Long and Maggie Q.

11.35 **Film: Ted.** (2012) A boy's magical living teddy remains his friend into adulthood, creating tension with his girlfriend. Comedy, starring Mark Wahlberg, with the voice of Seth MacFarlane.

1.25 The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.25** Coast vs Country. (R) **5.20** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** The A-Team. (R) **2.00** The A-Team. (R) **3.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **4.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.00** Rich House, Poor House. (R)

6.00 **The Wonderful World of Puppies.** The documentary concludes, offering an insight into the final stages of a puppy's early development. This time, the focus falls on how fun, engaging activities help young canines to improve their ability to learn – and their general state of happiness. Last in the series.

7.00 **Cruising with Jane McDonald: Caribbean.** The singer embarks on a series of ocean odysseys, and while she is no stranger to the open sea, having found fame on 1998 BBC TV documentary The Cruise, the mega-cruiser she boards is a far cry from the 600-passenger vessel she is used to. In the opening edition, she and her fellow passengers stop off in Nassau in the Bahamas, where Jane finds solace in the state's oldest baptist church. (R)

8.00 **The World's Most Luxurious Cruise Ship.** Part one of two. Following engineers and designers as they construct the liner Seven Seas Explorer, aiming to make it the most luxurious ship in the world of its size. (R)

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Wolverhampton Wanderers v Queens Park Rangers and Barnsley v Sheffield Wednesday.

10.00 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Northampton Town and Bradford City v Bury.

10.30 **Film: The Silence of the Lambs.** (1991) A trainee FBI agent engages in a battle of wills with an imprisoned psychopath to gain his help in catching a serial killer. Thriller, starring Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins.

12.40 SuperCasino. **3.10** Cowboy Builders. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Great Scientists. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Sicily: Wonder of the Mediterranean **8.00** Winter Olympics Extra **9.00** Modus **10.30** The Fall: The Wonderful and Frightening World of Mark E Smith **11.30** Top of the Pops: 1985 **12.35** Rock 'n' Roll Guns for Hire: The Story of the Sideman **2.05** Sicily: Wonder of the Mediterranean **3.05** Close

ITV2
11.55 Take Me Out **1.10** Mr Bean **1.45** Film: Beethoven (1992) **2.50** FYI Daily **2.55** Film: Beethoven (1992) **3.30** Film: Valentine's Day (2010) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50** Film: Valentine's Day (2010) **5.55** Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **6.55** FYI Daily **7.00** Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **9.00** Film: The Hangover Part II (2011) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: The Hangover Part II (2011) **11.05** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **1.00** Release the Hounds **2.00** Ibiza Weekender **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.15 A Touch of Frost **1.25** Film: Columbus: The Greenhouse Jungle (1972) **3.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.00** Midsomer Murders **7.00** The Durrells **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.00** The Good Karma Hospital **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.35 Fishing Impossible **12.35** Pawn Stars **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newbury. Coverage of today's meetings at Newbury and Warwick. **4.00** Film: Lonely Are the Brave (1962) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** Film: Lonely Are the Brave (1962) **6.15** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker Shoot-Out. Coverage of the third day's play at the single-frame tournament. **11.00** Film: Green Zone (2010) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05** Film: Green Zone (2010) **1.15** Minder **2.20** The Car Chasers **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 The Goldbergs **1.30** Toy Story Toons: Partysaurus Rex **1.40** The Big Bang Theory **6.45** Film: The Devil Wears Prada (2006) **9.00** Film: Riddick (2013) **11.20** Gogglebox **12.30** Naked Attraction **1.30** Celebs Go Dating **4.20** How I Met Your Mother **5.05** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4
11.00 Catch That Kid (2004) **1.00** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **2.45** Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **4.35** Volcano (1997) **6.35** I, Robot (2004) **9.00** The Other Woman (2014) **11.10** The Fly (1986) **1.00** Young Detective Dee: Rise of the Sea Dragon (2013) **3.45** Close

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CHOICE



Tom Garrison

Lost Pyramids of the Maya (Channel 4, 8pm)
The Mayan civilisation is now sadly consigned to the history books, but its legacy resonates strongly within our own to this day – whether it's elements of architecture still found within Mexico and Central America, ancient prehispanic sites scattered throughout the region, or in the plotlines of Hollywood movies (for some reason we're preoccupied with misinterpreted Mayan prophecies of armageddon). This documentary utilises exclusive access to the results of a huge scientific research project to learn more about the ancient civilisation, revealing fascinating insights into a people who remained largely hidden within the jungles, and transforming everything we thought we knew about the Maya.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** BBC News: Weather. **12.30** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day two from PyeongChang, South Korea. **2.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v France (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** Celebrity Mastermind. (R) **6.05** BBC News. **6.20** Regional Programme. **6.30** Countryfile. Ellie Harrison and Matt Baker visit Cambridgeshire, where a project is underway to turn a quarry into a safe red bed habitat for one of the UK's rarest birds, the bittern. Richard Taylor-Jones witnesses a spectacular display of wildlife. Adam Henson meets a young farmer in the New Forest, and Tom Heap discovers how Bill Gates is making the most of British agricultural expertise. **7.30** Still Open All Hours. Granville goes to Scarborough hoping to catch up with Mavis, and leaves Leroy in charge of the shop – which soon has an unconscious customer on the floor. Last in the series. **8.00** Call the Midwife. Sister Julianne helps a woman from Pakistan who is unable to have children, but who has found to her shock that her husband is bringing a pregnant second wife into their home. **9.00** McMaia. Alex travels to Moscow on business, unaware of the danger he is rushing into. He has only one way to save himself as he faces a final showdown with Vadim. Last in the series. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action – Newcastle United v Manchester United, Southampton v Liverpool and Huddersfield Town v Bournemouth. **11.35** The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level. **12.10** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day three from PyeongChang, South Korea. **3.30** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Continued coverage of day three from PyeongChang, South Korea.

BBC2

6.00 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day two from PyeongChang, South Korea. **9.15** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day two from PyeongChang, South Korea. **12.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **2.00** Food & Drink. (R) **2.30** Back in Time for Tea. (R) **3.30** The Crane Gang. (R) **4.30** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day two from PyeongChang, South Korea. **6.00** New York: America's Busiest City. Anita Rani, Ade Adepitan, Ant Anstead and Dan Snow look at food consumption in the Big Apple. From dusk until dawn at the New Fulton fish market in the Bronx, they uncover the hidden night time operations, hard-nosed negotiations and price fluctuations of this enormous wholesale operation. (R) **7.00** Winter Olympics – Today at the Games. Clare Balding presents highlights of the second day's action from the 23rd staging of the Games, which takes place in PyeongChang, South Korea. **8.00** South Korea: Earth's Hidden Wilderness. Documentary exploring the wildlife, traditions and landscape in the country's rural areas, including footage of dolphins swimming alongside humans and a falconer flying a goshawk. **9.00** Dragons' Den. The panel assesses the profit-making potential of selling advertising space on the move, a scheme for improving children's handwriting, and a motorcycle chain-tensioning product. **10.00** The Mash Report. Nish Kumar and a cast of comedy correspondents present the satirical and surreal take on the week's news. (R) **10.30** Live at the Apollo. Nish Kumar presents stand-up comedy from the Hammersmith Apollo in west London, introducing sets by Luisa Omelian and David O'Doherty. (R) **11.15** Cleverman. Koen's power and understanding grows as he spends time with Uncle Jimmy, while Waru discovers a dangerous creature and is led to a substance he believes can vanquish the Cleverman. **12.10** Women's Six Nations Highlights. **12.40** Film: The Deep. (2012) **2.05** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.05** Holly City. (R) **4.05** Weather for the Week Ahead. **4.10** BBC News.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knockers Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knockers Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. **7.30** Scrambled! Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled! The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled! Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled! Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled! Spy School. **9.05** Scrambled! Wishart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** River Monsters. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **11.25** The Voice UK. (R) **12.55** ITV News: Weather. **1.00** Britain's Best Walks with Julia Bradbury. (R) **1.30** What Would Your Kid Do? (R) **2.30** The Cruise: Return to the Mediterranean. (R) **3.00** Britain's Brightest Family. (R) **3.30** Tipping Point. (R) **4.30** Regional Programme: Weather. **4.40** ITV News: Weather. **5.00** The Celebrity Chase. (R) **6.00** Dancing on Ice. Love Week arrives at the rink, just in time for St Valentine's Day. Jayne Torvill, Christopher Dean, Jason Gardiner and Ashley Banjo once more take their places on the judging panel, as Holly Willoughby and Phillip Schofield welcome the eight remaining celebrities and their pro-skater partners back out onto the ice. **8.00** Endeavour. Oxford plays host to a veteran film star, in town to visit a local cinema. However, a mysterious death casts a sinister pall over the occasion, and offers the newly promoted DS Endeavour Morse a fresh case to pursue. Meanwhile, a family visit puts DCI Thursday's hospitality to the test. Inspector Morse prequel, starring Shaun Evans and Roger Allam. **10.00** ITV News: Weather. **10.10** Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Allegra Stratton, featuring reports on the latest issues and interviews with topical guests. (R) **11.05** Six Nations Highlights. Action from the second round of the championship, featuring Ireland v Italy at the Aviva Stadium, England v Wales at Twickenham and Scotland v France at Murrayfield. **12.00** Next of Kin. (R) **1.35** Jackpot247. **3.00** Take on the Twisters. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.35** The Simpsons. (R) **2.05** The Simpsons. (R) **2.35** Film: School of Rock. (2003) Comedy, starring Jack Black. **4.45** Film: Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer. (2007) Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Ioan Gruffudd. **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** Posh Pawn. The return of the programme offering an insight into the world of high-end pawnbroking. James takes a ride around London in an eye-catching supercar, with an aspiring fitness guru who's looking for £80,000. With her eyes on a round-the-world cruise costing £30,000, an adventurous retiree wants to sell a collection of handbags and jewellery. A car enthusiast contacts memorabilia expert Lawrence about a helmet that once belonged to land speed record-breaker Donald Campbell, and James faces a dilemma when he gets an offer for one of his favourite impulse buys. (R) **8.00** Lost Pyramids of the Maya. Documentary following a research project that has uncovered the ruins of an ancient hidden civilisation in the jungles of Central America. **9.00** Film: Spy. (2015) Premiere. A deskbound CIA agent provides valuable background support for a dashing secret agent, but has never gone into action herself. Everything changes, when the spy mysteriously vanishes, and she leaps into action to take his place, infiltrating the inner circle of a ruthless arms dealer and trying to avert a global catastrophe. Comedy adventure, starring Melissa McCarthy. **11.25** Film: Friends with Benefits. (2011) A recruiter sleeps with one of her client's staff, but keeping their feelings out of the arrangement proves tricky. Romantic comedy, starring Justin Timberlake and Mila Kunis. **1.25** The World's Most Expensive Food. (R) **2.20** The Supercat. (R) **3.15** Sarah Beeny's Four Rooms. (R) **4.10** Gillette World Sport. **4.35** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **5.05** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Moty. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.10** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.30** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.45** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.25** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.15** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.45** Film: Over Her Dead Body. (2008) Supernatural romantic comedy, starring Eva Longoria. **2.30** Film: What to Expect When You're Expecting. (2012) Comedy drama, starring Cameron Diaz. **4.25** 5 News Weekend. **4.30** Film: Sleepless in Seattle. (1993) Romantic comedy, with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. **5.30** 5 News Update. **5.35** Film: Sleepless in Seattle. (1993) Concluded. **6.30** Film: Along Came Polly. (2004) An obsessive man's orderly routine is thrown into disarray when a wildly spontaneous old friend walks back into his life. Romantic comedy, with Ben Stiller and Jennifer Aniston. Edited for language and sexual content. **8.00** Rom-Com LOL Special. Iain Lee narrates a collection of internet videos featuring weddings. (R) **9.00** Britain's Favourite Rom-Com. As St Valentine's Day approaches, a selection of film stars, comedians and TV personalities revisit some of cinema's most memorable romantic comedies, via a top 40 list interspersed with personal accounts of first loves. Celebrating the unique way this particular genre gets audiences laughing and crying in equal measure, and among the actors sharing their thoughts on the films are Sleepless in Seattle's Rita Wilson, and Gregory's Girl star Clare Grogan. **11.55** Film: There's Something About Mary. (1998) A lovesick man hires a seedy detective to track down his high-school sweetheart. Comedy, starring Cameron Diaz. **2.10** SuperCasino. **4.00** Get Your Tatts Out: Kavos Ink. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Great Scientists. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Winter Olympics Extra **9.00** Horizon: Mars – A Traveller's Guide **10.00** The Sky at Night **10.30** Film: Mia Madre (2015) **12.15** Songs Musicals **1.15** Horizon: Mars – A Traveller's Guide **2.15** Art, Passion & Power: The Story of the Royal Collection **3.15** Close
ITV2
12.00 Take Me Out **1.20** The Voice UK **2.50** Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.35** Film: Despicable Me 2 (2013) **5.35** FYI Daily **5.40** Film: Despicable Me 2 (2013) **6.40** Film: Jurassic World (2015) **7.40** FYI Daily **7.45** Film: Jurassic World (2015) **9.00** Survival of the Fittest **10.30** Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV3
12.15 Film: Columbo: The Greenhouse Jungle (1972) **1.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.50** The Durrells **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **11.00** Film: Changeling (2008) **1.45** Blue Murder **3.00** George and Mildred **3.55** Road to Avonlea **5.40** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
11.45 Live Snooker Shoot-Out. Coverage of the afternoon session in the fourth and final day's play. **4.00** Pawn Stars **5.45** Live Snooker Shoot-Out. Further coverage of the fourth day's play at the single-frame tournament. **10.00** Film: Executive Decision (1996) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05** Film: Executive Decision (1996) **12.45** Minder **2.35** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 The Goldbergs **12.30** Film: Casper (1995) **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Film: Men in Black (1997) **8.00** Celebs Go Dating **10.00** Naked Attraction **11.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.00** Gogglebox **1.00** Celebs Go Dating **2.05** Naked Attraction **3.00** First Dates Abroad **3.25** Hollywoods
Film4
11.00 The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (1966) **1.00** Young Sherlock Holmes (1985) **3.10** The Hound of the Baskervilles (1959) **4.50** Evolution (2001) **6.50** Last Holiday (2006) **9.00** 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi (2016) **11.50** Limitless (2011) **1.55** Enough Said (2013) **3.45** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Deadly Twin, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Premiere. A woman springs into action after discovering that the twin brother of her daughter's boyfriend has escaped from a psychiatric institution intent on revenge. Thriller, starring Brigid Brannagh, Timothy Granaderos and Calista Carradine. (2017)

TUESDAY

Fatal Fiance, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman joins forces with a reporter to clear the name of her fiance, who has become the prime suspect in a murder case. However, not everything is as it seems. Thriller, starring Jenny Wade, Jordi Vilasuso and Taylor Cole. (2016)

WEDNESDAY

Water for Elephants, Channel 4, 1.25am
A veterinary student is left homeless and penniless after his parents' deaths during the Depression. He joins a travelling circus, applying his skills to caring for the animals, and falls in love with the possessive owner's wife as they tend an elephant together. Romantic drama based on Sara Gruen's novel, with Reese Witherspoon and Robert Pattinson. (2011)



Water for Elephants, Wednesday, Channel 4, 1.25am

THURSDAY

A Husband's Confession, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Preacher Evan Tanning's peaceful life as a radio parenting advisor is shattered when the son he never knew he had turns up on his doorstep, jeopardising his credibility ahead of the nationwide launch of his show. However, events take an even more catastrophic turn when Tanning's wayward teenage niece Jamie goes missing. Drama, starring JR Bourne and Allie Gonino. (2015)

FRIDAY

Magic Mike, Channel 4, 12.10am
A male stripper who is the star attraction in a nightclub teaches a talented young dancer the tricks of the trade, while also introducing him to his hedonistic world. The veteran performer falls for his protegee's sister, but finds his wild lifestyle comes between them. Steven Soderbergh's comedy drama, with Channing Tatum and Olivia Munn. (2012)

Perez has a new case to crack on an old murder

We know what you're thinking – not ANOTHER crime drama.

After all, TV isn't exactly short of them, whether they're home grown or being imported from the US or, as is more likely these days, Europe.

There's no wonder that the recent National Television Awards introduced a category dedicated to them – there are just so many being made these days.

Two of them have been inspired by the books of Ann Cleeves. Vera recently ended its more recent run on ITV, and now Shetland is back for its fourth series, two years on from its predecessor.

Although born and raised in England, Cleeves knows the place well, having lived there; she's currently living in Whitley Bay, close to where her Vera books are set.

Some fans have complained that the TV plots don't follow the exact pattern of her novels, but she's relaxed about that.

"The TV adaptations are very often very different – the scriptwriters

cut some characters and add others, cut big chunks of plot and sometimes they even change the murderer!," she laughs.

"But prose and film are different forms. Besides, the book stops being mine every time someone reads it. Each reader brings their own imagination, history and prejudice to the story and each writer has to learn to let go. Adaptation just takes the process a bit further."

One of the secrets of Shetland's success is its far north setting – the isles themselves are almost a character in their own right.

"I think the viewers are naturally drawn to the place, the setting and curious about what Shetland is like," explains Douglas Henshall, who plays the lead character, DI Jimmy Perez. "And, beyond the location, it's a well written drama which draws you in."

This time around, fans of the books don't need to worry about a favourite story being torn apart by a screenwriter, because this time, it's

a completely original tale that runs throughout the six-part series.

"David Kane has created a compelling and distinctive crime story told across six hours. We are also thrilled to have the brilliant core cast return," says executive producer Kate Bartlett.

Her colleague Gaynor Holmes adds: "Shetland has a loyal following and we're sure they will be thrilled with the surprises we've got for them this time around."

The plot focuses on local man Thomas Malone, who has spent the past 23 years behind bars after being found guilty of murdering teenager Lizzie Kilmuir. Malone has always protested his innocence, and when his conviction is eventually overturned, it's up to Perez and the team to find out what really happened to Lizzie.

Perez speaks to the original investigating officer, Drew McColl. Now retired, he has plenty to say about the case, and explains why, despite DNA evidence to the contrary, he still believes Malone is guilty.



Douglas Henshall stars in Shetland, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Trauma, ITV, 9pm
New series. After a bad day at work, Dan Bowker arrives home drunk to discover that his 15-year-old son Alex has not come home and no-one knows where he is. Meanwhile, off-duty trauma surgeon Jon Allerton is at home celebrating his birthday when he is called into work to operate on Alex, who has been stabbed. When the medical team is unable to save Alex, Dan cannot let go of the idea that the surgeon is responsible for the death of his son. Thriller, starring Adrian Lester and John Simm, with Rowena King and Lyndsey Marshal

Julius Caesar Revealed, BBC1, 9pm

The classicist sets out on a quest to uncover the real Julius Caesar, challenging the received popular view of the Roman emperor. She looks at how he become the autocratic ruler of Rome, the tactics of his military campaigns, his use of spin and PR on his way to the top, and the reasons behind his assassination on the Ides of March in 44 BC. The scholar also examines his surprising legacy right up to the present day, revealing how his influence is still shaping language, politics and people's everyday lives.

TUESDAY

Flatpack Empire, BBC2, 9pm
Cameras continue to roam the boardrooms and warehouses of one of Sweden's most successful exports since Abba. This week, one of IKEA's newest designers, Hanna-Kaarina Heikkila, wants to challenge mass production by creating an 'imperfect vase' that has the finger-marks of its creator. There's also a visit to the home of the Billy Bookcase to see what it takes to be a supplier for IKEA.

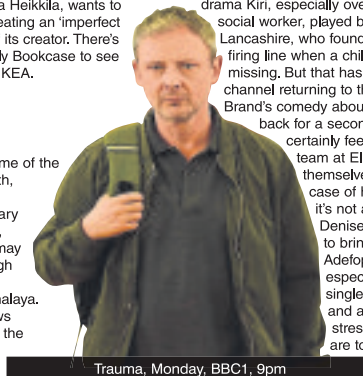
Wednesday Earth's Natural Wonders, BBC1, 9pm

New series. Cameras explore some of the most breathtaking places on earth, following the lives of some of the people who call these extraordinary places home. In the first episode, cameras follow Yak-herder Thokmay Lowa as he leads his herd through one of the most treacherous mountain passes in the high Himalayas. Elsewhere, the programme follows members of Inuit communities in the Canadian Arctic as they take part in the hazardous mussel

harvest, and people in Siberia searching for mammoth tusks, now released from the Siberian Permafrost after thousands of years.

Damned, Channel 4, 10pm

Channel 4 recently caused a stir with the acclaimed drama Kiri, especially over its portrayal of a social worker, played by Sarah Lancashire, who found herself in the firing line when a child in her care went missing. But that hasn't stopped the channel returning to the subject as Jo Brand's comedy about social workers is back for a second series. The run certainly feels topical as the team at Elm Heath find themselves dealing with a case of historic abuse. So, it's not a great time for Denise (Georgie Glenn) to bring Mimi (Lolly Adefope) into the fold, especially as newly single Al (Alan Davies) and a permanently stressed Rose (Brand) are too busy to mentor her.



Trauma, Monday, BBC1, 9pm

Thursday Children Who Kill, ITV, 9pm

Juveniles found guilty of murder in the US are given life, with no chance of parole – a headline approach that in 2015 prompted the American Supreme Court to rule such sentences as 'unconstitutional'. With the system now under review, Susanna Reid travels to the US and talks to young killers about their crimes and life in jail. Susanna also meets the families of victims, to ask how they feel about a possible change to America's approach to juvenile sentencing.

Friday Requiem, BBC1, 9pm

Aron Morgan lodges a complaint against Matilda for harassing Davey, and the police are unmoved by Matilda showing them what she believes is a clue to Carys' disappearance. Rose is pushed to breaking point as old wounds are reopened, Ed gets jittery as Trudy gives him the cold shoulder, and Graves becomes increasingly suspicious that he's hiding something. Sylvia reveals the peculiar ancestry of the Dean family, Hal identifies the source of the eerie music on the audiotapes, and Trudy remembers a crucial detail about the day Carys vanished. Psychological thriller, starring Lydia Wilson.

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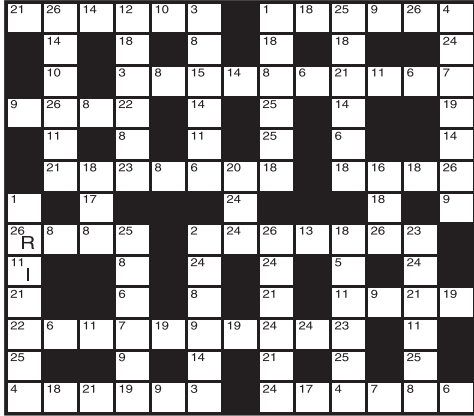
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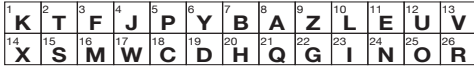
No.466

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

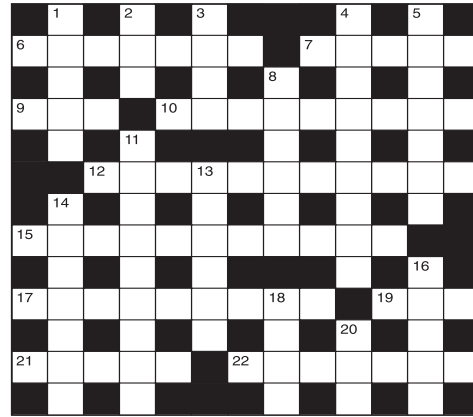
Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. Keeps earth-bound for certain reason (7)
7. Topless figure with a tan? (5)
- 9 & 19Ac. Vegetable to decay at the back of the vehicle (6)
10. Decree one should be encircled by heavy artillery (9)
12. One man went to mow! (11)
15. Where a man keeps his capital and his secrets! (5,3,3)
17. Could it show the force of a testament? (9)
19. See 9 Across.
21. What directors do for the farm animal (5)
22. Uneasiness if sea-mail goes astray (7)

Down

- 1 & 16Dn. Retarding mechanism faulty, we hear - manage to escape (5,5)
2. See 20 Down
3. German flower produces a certain fragrance, one hears! (4)
4. I'm having a preference for being unbiased (9)
5. See 13 Down.
8. America is after the record for this event (6)
11. Hospital attendants in whom discipline reposes (9)
- 13 & 5Dn. Pedagogue chose the carol, maybe (6,7)
14. Yet an alteration about a football team causes concern (7)
16. See 1 Down
18. Angela Nolan could show impetuosity (4)
- 20 & 2Dn. Display to put down in the open air (6)



Quick Clues:

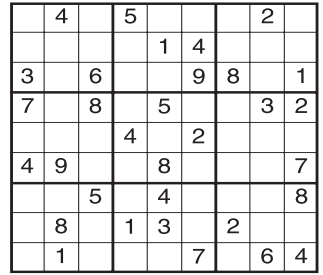
Across

6. Pagan (7)
7. Faithful (5)
9. Grow older (3)
10. Indiscreet (9)
12. Of inferior quality (6-5)
15. Foot soldiers (11)
17. Unceasing (9)
19. Snoop (3)
21. Sharp (5)
22. Amaze (7)

Down

1. Simulate (5)
2. Pig pen (3)
3. Judge (4)
4. Venetian boatman (9)
5. Serious (7)
8. Weekday (6)
11. Lay waste (9)
13. Trip (6)
14. Bill (7)
16. Salt water (5)
18. Too (4)
20. Decay (3)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >



LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Bare necessity; 8 Idolatry; 9 Emma; 10 Idle; 20 Transact; 22 Carried the day. Down: 1 Landseer; 2 Sealed; 3 Beat; 4 Recycles; 5 Ascent; 6 Stem; 11 Rarities; 13 Special; 15 Theory; 17 Rasped; 19 Dead; 21 Acts. QUICK - Across: 7 Reprehensible; 8 Composer; 9 Gone; 10 Frolic; 12 Preach; 14 Adjoin; 16 Decent; 18 Epic; 20 Inwardly; 22 Comprehensive. Down: 1 Devoured; 2 Propel; 3 Thus; 4 Intrepid; 5 Single; 6 Plan; 11 Consider; 13 Conclude; 15 Occupy; 17 Caress; 19 Poor; 21 Weep.

Quiz

1. What was the first Viscount Montgomery of Alamein's first name?
2. Which post did David Owen hold in the Labour Government from 1977-1979?
3. The best-known form of which game is called 8-ball?
4. Which actor played Lord Bellamy in Upstairs, Downstairs?
5. Which condition was also called the king's evil?
6. Which comic actor's first talking film was Monsieur Verdoux?
7. What, in 1959, became the City of London's first new theatre in 200 years?
8. What is the name of the 2-day holiday at the start of the Jewish New Year?
9. Who was Queen Elizabeth II's father?
10. Which partnership wrote My Fair Lady and Paint Your Wagon?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Ostrogoths; 2 Letchworth; 3 Seraphim; 4 TS Eliot; 5 Campbells; 6 Westminster Abbey; 7 Fungus; 8 Napalm; 9 Oxford; 10 Loganberry.

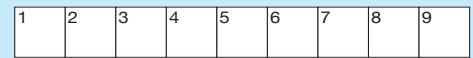
Niner: POULTICED

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

8628945
37651
87631

gives a game,
gives a second game,
gives a third game.



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 Honest reliable service

ANT ELECTRIC

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KEEP IT LOCAL
 'No Job Too Small'

Gardening

R & S Gardens

- All garden work undertaken
- Hedges and lawns cut
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Telephone: 07851 323303

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LBT Fencing

All types of quality fencing supplied & erected
Plus decking, slabbing & block paving
FREE QUOTES
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Manufacturers of all Concrete Products
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Gardening

ROWAN TREE & GARDEN SERVICES LTD

*Tree Surgeon Specialist *Stump Grinding/Root Removal
 *Hedges Pruned/Shaped *Jungles Cleared/Full Landscapes
 *Fencing *Turfing *Concreting *Driveways & Patios
 *Plus Much More Call Now For a No Obligation Quotation
WWW.ROWANGROUP.CO.UK
01384 213644 or 07733 226568

AGE CONCERN & Local Authority Contractor, N.P.T.C. qualified,
 Public Liability Insurance (£5 million) All staff C.R.B. Certified
PART OF THE ROWAN GROUP OF COMPANIES

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All Landscape Work Undertaken
 No Job Too Small or Too Big
FREE QUOTATIONS
 All aspects of Tree Surgery,
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FREE QUOTES & SPECIAL RATES FOR OAP'S

OUR PRODUCTS
 FENCING • SHED BASES • SLABbing • GARDEN MAINTENANCE • LAWN CUTTING
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Gardening & Landscaping Services
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- Roller
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Cuts, Colours, Perms etc
 Hair Extensions
 Call Lyndsey **07795 514858**

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£27.99
with this advert
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0121 559 6001

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HOUSEHOLD PLUMBING
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All installations and repairs
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TIDY, MODERN APPROACH. REGISTERED PLUMBER
 No job too small. Friendly service. Free advice and quotes
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 FREE quote on
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 We Fit UPVC
 Soffits & Fascias

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1

Call us on...
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2

E-mail us at...
mark.moore@expressandstar.co.uk

3

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£40
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For competitive quotes on all your refurbishment needs on plastering, boarding, overboarding, partitions, re-skimming and artex covering.

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allweatherroofinguk@outlook.com

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on all UPVC Fascias, Gutters,
New Roofs/Slate Tile & Felt
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- Flat roof specialist
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- Discounted for OAPs
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Mobile: 07584 081228

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Same day delivery faster than
A phone call!!!!

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REMOVED FOR FREE

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Walls, floors, bathrooms, kitchens and conservatories.

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- Door Adjustment
- New Locks Installed

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QUALITY | VALUE | SERVICE

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Classified Ads

Buy Local, Sell Local

Index

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- 2 Leisure Time
- 3 Home & Services
- 4 Pets & Animals
- 5 Business & Farming
- 6 Property
- 7 Jobs
- 8 Motoring
- 9 Local Information
- 10 Personals

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1

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GLITE PRO wheelchair, lightweight,
was £200 new, sell for £75. Care co
electric pavement scooter, Zoom
plus £175. 07538 651604.



KYCMO MAXER

8mph Mobility Scooter.
Glossy black. Solid tyres.
Excellent condition as used
only twice.

Spec includes 31 stone max,
adjustable tiller, free delivery
within 20 mile radius.

£2,500 ono

01902 763555.



MOBILITY SCOOTER FOR SALE

Hardly used.

£300 ono

07812 397213.

QUINGO TOURA 2
Immaculate condition, as new,
12 months old, hardly used,
cost £6,595, genuine reason for
sale.

Offers.

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tioned lifts from £799. New avail-
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Cancel/amend, call before 3.00pm
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HIGHLEY PARK HOME

12 month residential site, Park
home lodge. Fabulous views,
own garden and drive way.
Near to Highley shops and bus
stop.

£82,000.

07774 715830.

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READERS ARE REMINDED
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covered by a recognised bonding or
insurance scheme.

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Free Ads

IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.

Online at
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expressandstar.co.uk

3 Home & Services

Furniture

A LIGHT OAK Dining room table and
chairs, neatly folds away, excellent
condition. £75.
01902 820973.

In Your Garden

FLYMO LAWMOWER for sale
£35.
07828 664983.

Items For Sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

KITCHEN TABLE 30" x 30" plus two
chairs. £50. Dirt Devil vacuum
cleaner. £50. 07828 664983.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

Items Wanted

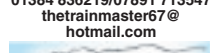
A BEST CASH PRICE



FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS

Any gauge or age

Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/
Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/
any live steam. Also Die Cast,
Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219/07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@
hotmail.com



READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

SPECTRUM GAMES Wanted, plus
any Spectrum 128k+2 computer
wanted also any old Crash or your
Sinclair Magazines. 01902 892518.

WANTED LIVE GROUP
For booking November 17,
Crown Pub at Codsall. Free
drinks and buffet. 2hrs of
playing only.

Contact Mr Hill on
01902 842033.

2 Leisure Time

Caravans Wanted

* All Caravans Wanted *
* Any Age or Condition *
* CASH * WAITING *
* Immediate collection *
* Call Bill on 07825 325 913 *

Jumble Sales / Fetes

BRIC-A-BRAC FAIR
Sunday, 11th February
Next Sale: February 25th
KINVER COMMUNITY CENTRE, DY7 6ER
10.30am - 4pm
Tel: 01384 894464



A BEST CASH PRICE PAID FOR DIE CAST CARS / LORRIES
Britains, Corgi, Dinky, Spot on, Tri-ang, Danbury Mint and Mamod Engines.
Best prices paid.
Any condition.
Collections bought.
Telephone 01922 327897 or 07976 691563.

AUTO MEMORABILIA WANTED

SHELL, ESSO, CASTROL ETC ALSO
GARAGE CLEARANCES
Old Enamel Signs, Petrol Cans, Old Jugs, Bikes and Motorbikes.
Anything old.
**** TOP PRICES PAID ****
01384 836219/07891 713547

OLD BIBLES Wanted, pre 1900, for Private buyer. Fair prices paid. Distance no object. Telephone 0115 973 5662.

Loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

specialists at your service

Aerials

AA DIGITAL AERIALS
Aerials fitted from £79.99
01902 858191 • 01384 429166
01543 439095 • 01922 716029

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Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191

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Brought to you by Express & Star

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Over 35 years exp
All aspects of building work
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All work guaranteed
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12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
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IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING YOUR HOME
enquiries@changingrooms.org.uk
Is bathing becoming difficult?
Let us make life easier
Easy Access/ Wet Room Specialists
Showroom at 47A Kent Street, Dudley
01902 670426

Fencing



"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."

Michael-Portway Fencing

For great business results call
01902 319 191

Classified Ads
Brought to you by Express & Star

PORTWAY FENCING SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards. £69.95
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12 noon
83 Portway Rd, W.bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

C B SHEDS & FENCING
We supply & fit. Free quotes.
Call: 01922 720270
We also supply sleepers and decking

House Clearances

ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken.
07852 172641 / 07710 360327 / 01902 534021

Gas Fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered. It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

Plastering

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE
Clean and Reliable. All Work Undertaken. All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

Removals

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS. LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

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GRIFFIN ROOFING
All aspects of roofing work undertaken
Fascias, Soffits & Guttering
Roof Conversions & more
Free Quotes:
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Flat Roofing, Tiling, Roof Repairs, Fascias and Gutters.
Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.
www.mgroofingwestmidlands.co.uk

Rubbish Removal

LET'S TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed. Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

Skip Hire

Grinsells Skip Hire LTD
Mini, Midi, Maxi, Large Skips.
Monday to Friday.
Saturday half day.
0121 555 6060

t.v. / home entertainment

Service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST
Any TV Repairs. Digital aerials, sky, CCTV cameras, TV wall mounts and TV set ups. 07850 330251.

Express & Star

OVEN CLEANERS!

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(T&Cs Apply)

Call Claire Smith: 01902 319661
claire.smith@expressandstar.co.uk

4 Pets & Animals

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BUGDIE CAGE with stand and toys, almost new, £30.
01384 918205.

5 Business & Farming

Business Opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

6 Property

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

Properties Wanted

WE BUY ANY HOUSE CASH

CALL US FREE 24 Hours/ 7days
0800 246 1047

GET UP TO **£20,000 CASH ADVANCE**

✓ All Your Costs Paid & No Selling Fees
✓ We Buy Any Area & Any Condition
✓ STOP Repossession/Eviction
✓ Release Your Equity Today
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FREE Solicitors, FREE Survey, FREE Home Removals, FREE EPC

Yes! HOME BUYERS
THE EASY WAY TO SELL YOUR HOUSE

We Buy Houses For Cash

Free Valuation? Yes! No Fees? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any House? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!

Get your FREE, instant cash offer today!

Call **0121 663 1403**
or text "Cash" to 66777 yeshomebuyers.com

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!

FAST 4 Your House CASH

You agree the price, we buy the house...

- NO AGENTS FEES
- COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
- FREE SOLICITORS
- ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

0800 999 999 6
01384 500 500

www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

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• Free Solicitors • No Fees • Any House • Any Condition

0800 389 6788 01902 628047

Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week Terms apply

We buy houses

Sell your house fast

- avoid repossession
- behind on payments
- job relocation
- unwanted inheritance

What more - we buy in any condition
No estate agent fees
We pay all your legal fees

ACT NOW!

Contact us on:
07796 801219 / 07988 882090

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

A COMFORTABLE FURNISHED room for single, mature, working person. CH, TV, cleaning, linen, all bills, £275pcm, no DSS. Stafford Road, Wton. 07957 595840.

Accommodation To Let

A SMART SINGLE ROOM in a Shared house, Netherton. £85 p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks deposit. 07940 116130.
LARGE SELF CONTAINED studio flat, CH, laundry, car park. Tetterhall Road. 01902 334081.
PENN ONE bed self contained flat, CH, DG, DSS, over 35's, £85pw. No deposit. 07900 156313.

7 Jobs

Courses

BIRMINGHAM: 5-6 May and 5-6 September
STOKE: 6-7 August
WOLVERHAMPTON: 8-9 August

Accredited ocn training

Learn how to take blood

TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST

Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - NATIONALLY RECOGNISED

- Allied Healthcare Career Path
- Accredited (advanced) qualification
- No previous experience required

For more info, or to book online: www.geopace.com

High demand inc: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - MOD - Research

Full Time General

THE APPRENTICESHIP SHOW



Apprenticeships are open to ALL ages
Come and find out how they could work for you

Thursday 8 March 2018
The International Centre, Telford
12noon - 7.30pm Last entry 7pm



www.telfordjobbox.co.uk/tas18

Showcasing 100's of apprenticeships opportunities across Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire, The West Midlands and beyond.



8

Motoring

Cars Over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.



CITROEN BERLINGO VAN
2009, 09 Reg. White. 1.6 Diesel, MOT June. Good Condition. Two owners from new. 129000 miles. Genuine reason for sale.
£1,850
07710 583286

EXCELLENT CONDITION

DACIA SANDERO LAUREATE DCi
5dr hatchback, white, one very careful owner.
£6,000
or very nearest offer
Strictly genuine callers only please.
07729 953812.

Cars Over £1500



MAZDA MX5 1.8S
2001 roadster, MoT, average mileage, racing bronze, good service record, mohair hood, alloys, EW, pioneer dab, chrome roll bars.
£1,750
07771 428793.



MINI COOPER
2005, 63,600 Miles, silver, part Leather Interior, panoramic electric roof mot November 18, 6 disc cd,
£1,700 ono
01902 657460

ECONOMICAL

RENAULT MEGANE MK 3 ESTATE
New shape. 59 plate. 100,000 miles. Very good condition. 10 months MoT. £30 car tax per year.
£2,100 ono.
01384 829744 / 07966 630912.

ECONOMICAL

TOYOTA YARIS 1.3
2005, 5dr hatchback. 2 lady owners from new. full MoT, recently serviced. Service history. Immaculate condition.
£1,850.
07467 562680.

Cars Under £1500

BARGAIN

CHEVROLET AVEO 1.2
2010, 53,950 miles, black, central locking, electric windows, MoT till May 2018, good condition.
£1450 ono
01902 238488 / 07787 424281.

DAIHATSU MOVE. 1997, 79,000 miles, silver, electric windows, air bag, fsh, MoT, £350 ono. 07739 380274.



FORD FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC
03 MoT'd, low miles, 68k, new tyres, exhaust, battery, very clean inside and out,
£595.
07791 113080

BARGAIN

FORD KA
2007, 61,519 miles, long MoT, good condition, test drive, blue.
£750 ono
01902 238488 / 07787 424281.

4X4

LANDROVER FREELANDER SE TD4
52 Reg., 90,000 miles, red, very good condition, two owners.
£1,495 o.n.o.
01902 895481.

IDEAL FIRST CAR

NISSAN MICRA 1.0
P. Reg. Red. MoT. FSH. Excellent runner.
Bargain £395 ono.
07973 775560.



RENAULT SCENIC
2005, 53,000 miles, grey, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, 12 months MoT, central locking, pas, alloys, CD, spots.
£1,200 ono.
01902 676865.

LOW MILEAGE

ROVER 620Si
1997, owned car the 2002, two previous owners, MoT due September 2018, garaged, excellent condition, 77,642 miles.
£550 ono.
07939 101769.

IMMACULATE

TOYOTA AVENSIS T3X
2003, 146,000 miles, MoT to April, EW, EM, PAS, onboard computer, dual climate control, alloy wheels, metallic gold, fsh but no record. Immaculate condition.
£650
07983 329053.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL TIGRA 1.4 CONVERTIBLE
Silver, 09 plate, 2dr, 10 months MoT, average mileage, excellent condition.
£950 ono
07938 598881.

LOOK

VAUXHALL VECTRA 2.0T SRI 2006
Silver, 75k, 18ins alloys, 12 months MoT, very good condition, **£1,495.**
01562 631640.

Classic Cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

Commercial Vehicles



FORD TRANSIT 85/260 SWB DIESEL VAN 2008 (08)
Semi high roof. Safe-T-Bar. Tow Bar. Full ply lining. 12 months MoT. FSH. Very good condition.
£1,750 ono.
07836 239590.

Motorbikes



HONDA CBR 600 1998
Black / Orange. Fully Serviced. 12 months MoT. Very good condition.
£2,000 ono.
07828 928354.

Scrap Vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

Vehicles Wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

alan reed cars

Used cars wanted for cash
Top prices paid. HP settled.
Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

9

Local Information

Public Notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to

Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

LICENSING ACT 2003

25 JAN 2018
NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT: SUBBETHA SATHYANATHAN HAS APPLIED TO Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council FOR Variation of Current Premises Licence VARIATION OF HOURS FOR RETAIL SALE OF ALCOHOL OFF THE PREMISES FOR THE PREMISES SELECT AND SAVE CONVENIENCE STORE, 64-66 LONG LANE, HALESOWEN, B62 9LB THE FOLLOWING OPENING HOURS ARE APPLIED FOR: MONDAY TO SUNDAY BETWEEN THE HOURS 06.00 TO 01.00 HOURS

Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to the Licensing Team, Dudley MBC, Unit 1 Hurst Business Park, Narrow Boat Way, Brierley Hill, DY5 1UF (liquor.licensing@dudley.gov.uk) by 23RD FEB 2018 and give the reasons for their opposition. Copies of those objections will be sent to the applicant for their consideration and comment. Persons objecting to the grant of licences may be invited to attend a public hearing. It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for making false statement is a level 5 fine on the standard scale.

MARGARET EILEEN BAKKER (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 74 John Street Rowley Regis West Midlands B65 0EN, who died on 18/12/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 13/04/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

GEORGE GREEN LLP
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10

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Well-built and good range of engines

By Carmel Stewart

Staying well on trend, Skoda has added a second SUV to its range. The new Karoq follows closely in the tyre tracks of the larger Kodiaq which has sold very well since its launch a few months ago and has attracted slightly younger buyers than is the norm for Skoda.

It is hoped the new family-sized Karoq, which effectively replaces the outgoing Yeti, will lower that demographic still further.

Built on the VW MQB platform which also accounts for the SEAT Ateca and the VW Tiguan, it enters into a highly competitive sector into which pretty well every manufacturer has eased its own SUV. Not surprising when you consider that, while overall new car sales are down, this particular sector is up 11per cent.

Unlike the Kodiaq, which has a seven-seat option, the aerodynamically styled Karoq is confined to five supportive seats, housed in a well-built, comfortable cabin with decent leg and head room all-round, albeit with a transmission tunnel for those middle feet.

The dash is clear and uncluttered and the sat nav excellent. Rear seat passengers have tray table as standard for those essential snacks. The boot is a fair size at 521litres which expands to 1,630 litres with the rear seat backs flat.

Engines are of the tried and tested variety and range from the 1.0litre, 115ps, three-cylinder petrol to the 2.0litre 150ps four-cylinder diesel.

The feisty 1.5litre 150ps petrol, which has been tweaked slightly for the Karoq, is expected to be the best seller. It packs a fair punch and showed an excellent turn of speed



The boot is 521 litres and 1,630 litres with rear seats flat



Rear seat passengers have tray table as standard

on request. In addition, there are two diesel engines available – a 1.6litre, 115ps and a 2.0litre 150ps which has the added attraction of being available with four-wheel-drive.

If your load lugging is occasional rather than frequent, the 1.0 litre three-cylinder will suffice, being more powerful than you might suppose and returning an average 52.3mpg.

The diesel units are inevitably the most economical with the red rosette going to the 1.6litre TDI which returns an official average of 61.4mpg.

Transmissions vary from the wonderful seven-speed DSG, which is hard to fault, to the excellent notchy six-speed manual – neither will present any problems.

In fact, no aspect of the new Karoq will present any problems – except to the sales person, for the SUV market is now so crowded that it is difficult to single out any single model as the best of what is a very good bunch.

The new Karoq is as well placed as any. It is well-built, has a good range of engines and a generous standard spec and the starting

price of £20,875.00 is on a par with its rivals.

Standard SE spec includes 17-inch Ratikon alloys, privacy glass, LED rear lights, dual-zone climate control, DAB radio, Bluetooth, front assist, pedestrian monitor and driver fatigue sensor.

SE L models are priced from £23,165 and add 18-inch Braga alloys, Amundsen satellite navigation with eight-inch touchscreen display, Smartlink+, keyless entry and start/stop, full LED headlights with adaptive front light system, heated front seats, and Alcantara

upholstery, rear view camera and front and rear parking sensors.

The range-topping Edition trim comes with 19-inch Crater alloys, panoramic sunroof, metallic paint and leather upholstery as standard. Columbus satellite navigation with 9.2-inch touchscreen display and gesture control, electrically operated boot and LED ambient lighting are also included along with lane assist, blind spot protection with rear traffic alert, traffic sign recognition and a price tag of £27,110.



The Karoq follows closely in the tracks of the larger Kodiaq which has sold very well since its launch a few months ago

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Grandland X Sport Nav 1.2i (130PS) Turbo Start/Stop: Urban: 47.1 (6.0), Extra Urban: 62.8 (4.5), Combined 43.5 (6.5). CO₂ emissions: 149g/km."

All of the following retailers are acting as a credit broker and not a lender: Worcester Carsales Limited trading as Dudley Motor Company, Worcester Carsales Limited trading as T Wall Garages, Worcester Carsales Limited trading as Stourbridge Motor House, Worcester Carsales Limited trading as Halesowen Motor House. We will introduce you to a limited number of lenders. Commission may be received.

Model shown Grandland X Sport Nav 1.2i (130PS). Offer subject to availability, on selected models at participating Retailers only. Conditional Sale. Finance subject to status. Ts&Cs apply. Applicants must be 18+. Finance by Vauxhall Finance, CF15 7YT. 24-60 month term. Offer applies to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 vehicles (purchase only excluding B2B supported vehicles). All other customers are excluded. Offer available on orders or registrations between 19 December 2017 and 02 April 2018. #Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. Official EU regulated test data is provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Vauxhall Motors Limited reserves the right to change, amend or withdraw this offer at any point in time. Correct at time of going to press.

Commercial feature

T Wall are both Ford and Vauxhall main dealerships from their headquarters in High Street, Pensnett, Kingswinford, offering the full range of new cars from both manufacturers, as well as used cars, servicing, repairs and MoT testing, as well as operating the Motability scheme.

Expertise

Now the company's familiar site has expanded, allowing significantly more space for customer parking, and to increase the choice of used cars available for customers to check out.

T Wall has also taken on a very experienced sales person to deal with motor home sales.



T Wall offers the full range of new cars from Ford and Vauxhall

"It is early days but we have already had some good enquiries and we think this will

But its services by no means end with just selling cars. Its expert technicians use the very latest diagnostic equipment and are trained to service all makes of cars and vans



The site at Pensnett, Kingswinford has been expanded

The company is also highly experienced in running Motability, the scheme which allows those with disabilities access to worry-free motoring – with those who qualify.

The company also stocks quality parts and accessories, and carries out MoT testing.

[illegible]



The Stonic is Kia's first venture into this competitive market sector

In the market for a compact SUV? Then try a Kia Stonic

By Carmel Stewart

Proof, if proof were needed, that the SUV market is taking over the automotive world, comes in the shape of yet another chunky, robust, highly capable model easing its way into the segment to challenge all comers.

In a market which is expected to see European sales doubling to more than two million in the next couple of years, the Kia Stonic may well prove to be a worthy challenger.

Sitting on the Rio supermini platform and built in South Korea, the Stonic is Kia's first venture into this highly competitive market sector. Prices start at £16,295 – so slightly pricier than its rivals – but Kia argues that it has a more extensive standard spec list and that unbeatable seven-year warranty.

As always, Kia has kept things simple with three tried and tested engines, one manual transmission and two trim levels – Grade 2 and First Edition.

The peppy 1.0litre, 118bhp three-cylinder turbo charged petrol unit, well matched to the six-speed manual transmission will, more than likely, be top choice for most buyers. Not only will it average 56.5mpg but it will also zap from a standing start to 60mph in less than ten seconds so, unless you are looking for a getaway vehicle, that should be fast enough for most of us.



Standard specification includes Apple CarPlay

The entry-level 1.4litre, 98bhp petrol, averages 51.4 mpg. It is less powerful than the 1.0litre and is only available with Grade 2 trim but is the lowest priced.

The 1.6litre, 108bhp turbo diesel sits less comfortably under the bonnet of the Stonic than the petrol units. Certainly, it has more torque than the others and it'll be first choice for anyone who needs to soak up the miles, averaging as it does 67.3mpg. It also clocked up the lowest CO2 but it wasn't as quiet or as much fun.

If an auto is a must there is one available but no 4WD is on the cards as, surprisingly, the take-up for all-wheel drive in this sector of the market is only eight per cent.

On the road, the Stonic is a sweet, smooth, solid performer, offering a comfortable, composed, enjoyable drive, presenting no problems right from the off.

Being engineered with European roads in mind, its well-tuned suspension, responsive steering and high driving position all engender confidence. Road holding, even when pushed into sharp corners, is unwavering, thanks in part at least to the standard fit electronic stability control and vehicle stability management which combine to do pretty much as described, keeping the vehicle firmly on the straight and narrow.

Standard spec includes 17-inch alloys, skid plates, air con, all-round electric windows, roof rails, rear parking sensors, Bluetooth and LED daytime running lights, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity with smartphone integration.

Electronic safety aids, which even just a few years ago were very expensive optional extras, are now fitted as standard by many manufacturers – Kia Included.

Hill start assist is standard across the range as is vehicle stability management while autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning, high beam assist, driver attention alert and blind spot detection are standard in First Edition.

Also standard on this higher spec model are touch screen navigation with traffic messages, high beam assist which automatically switches the lights between dipped and full beam according to the traffic around it and the local street lighting, contrasting interior colour options, two-tone exterior paint and those delights of winter driving, heated front seats and steering wheel.

The roof, wing mirror casings and rear spoiler can be picked out in either black, lime green, red or orange – which look far better than they sound – depending on the choice of main body colour, and there are colour accents in the interior on the seats and around the lower centre console and display screen areas.

If you are in the market for a compact SUV, the Kia Stonic should be on your test drive list, at the very least.

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Simply super Suzuki Swift a top dog

By Sharon Walters

What a delight, a car that is a world player but with a model specifically designed for British and European roads.

Any my how you can appreciate that when driving about in Suzuki's simply super Swift. In order to suit the needs of European customers, Suzuki knew that simply designing and developing the new Swift in Japan would not be sufficient. So it turned to the roads of Europe, where teams of local evaluation drivers helped to hone the new car.

Testing of the chassis, which is the centrepiece of the Swift's evolution, started in January 2016 in the United Kingdom and Germany. Covering a total of more than 6,000 miles, the teams tested as many as 90 different suspension prototypes in an effort to meet the need for optimum steering feel together with providing supple and agile suspension for British roads.

The latest model arrived on our shores last June 12 years after it first docked. An initial drive back then along winding roads in the Peak District impressed but how would it cope with my country commute to and from the office and lengthy trips on the motorway?

Simply super! Sorry to sound so twee, but it was.

This supermini made a big impact during its earlier incarnations and the latest seems to be doing even better. There is more room for people and their luggage and it is faster off the mark. At the same time it is a little more refined and more powerful while also being more economic. It is dynamic and comfortable as well, what more could you ask for?

In a little more detail looks-wise it has a more



There's a good quality interior finish impressive grille, LED daytime running lights and stronger haunches which give it more prominence on the road.

The Swift's extra space comes courtesy of a longer wheelbase which permitted the engineers to give more space in the cabin, especially for those in the back, and a bigger boot of 265 litres – a very good space for a car of this size which can easily cope with luggage for a holiday.

It's a dynamic drive with its lower and wider stance and feels very secure when tackling tight corners. It is also comfortable and enjoyed that motorway cruise much more than I expected a car of the Swift's size to do, as did I the driver.

Swift is available as a five-door model in SZ3, SZ-T and SZ5 grades. Standard equipment for all models in the range is comprehensive and the SZ3 model with 1.2-litre Dualjet engine and manual transmission will include six airbags, air conditioning, leather steering wheel, DAB radio with Bluetooth and four speakers, rear



The Suzuki Swift starts at just under £12,000 and goes up to £16,849

privacy glass, LED daytime running lights, 15-inch wheels, body coloured door mirrors and front electric windows.

A 90hp 1.2-litre four cylinder Dualjet engine offers CO2 emissions of 98g/km and 65.7mpg for the manual transmission model.

And the 111PS 1.0-litre three cylinder Boosterjet turbo engine offers CO2 emissions of 104g/km and 61.4mpg for manual transmission model. This Boosterjet engine might appear small but it is remarkable with that power and torque more usually found in a diesel engine than a small petrol and fuel

economy. Going through the gears is quick and easy and in top gear is very refined giving quite remarkable fuel use on that motorway marathon I undertook.

The Boosterjet is also available with Suzuki's SHVS mild hybrid system offering CO2 emissions of 97g/km and Suzuki's excellent ALLGRIP 'AUTO' 4WD system. four-wheel drive system is a well proven and simple fully automatic and permanent four-wheel drive layout which transfers additional torque to the rear wheels when needed.

Inside, for a car so modestly priced, there is

a decent finish and quality of trim (it's certainly not too plasticity) and interior features include a centre console turned five degrees towards the driver, front seats with optimised shape and spring position with heightened side bolsters.

The fascia is neat and tidy with sporty white accents and satin chrome with a basic black theme. The instrument cluster offers either colour or monochrome LCD in the centre with a coolant temperature and fuel gauge incorporated within the two main gauges. And all controls are easy to reach and operate.

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Model Shown: Vitara 1.6 Kuro petrol manual including metallic paint (£500) available at £19,249 on the road. Vitara range official fuel consumption figures in mpg (L/100km): Urban from 42.1 (6.7) to 61.4 (4.6), extra urban from 55.4 (5.1) to 76.3 (3.7), combined from 49.5 (5.7) to 70.6 (4.0). Official CO₂ emissions from 131g/km to 106g/km.
Fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. Hire Purchase product available on 0% APR over 12-42 months. Personal Contract Purchase product available on 0% APR over 25-43 months. Offer is available from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. Credit is available to UK residents aged 18 years or over, subject to status, from Suzuki Finance, a trading style of Suzuki Financial Services Ltd, St. William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. This offer is subject to availability and Suzuki Financial Services Ltd reserves the right to withdraw or amend this offer without notice or prior warning. Terms and Conditions apply. Suzuki Financial Services Ltd, part of Lloyds Banking Group. Offer correct at the time of going to print.

Celebrating 100,000 Insignia orders

Fresh from its success at the Company Car Today CCT100 awards, where it was voted Best Upper Medium car and number two overall in the CCT100 models to meet every fleet need, the Insignia is available in Grand Sport and Sports Tourer body styles. Vauxhall's flagship range also includes a rugged Country Tourer and a forthcoming GSi performance model that will arrive in Vauxhall showrooms in the spring.

The new Insignia range is powered by a portfolio of turbocharged, four-cylinder, diesel and petrol engines from 1.5 to 2.0-litre, combined with a choice of six-speed manual or six and eight-speed automatic transmissions.

The most powerful diesel and petrol engines are also offered with innovative torque vectoring all-wheel drive.

Buyers not only benefit from numerous state-of-the-art technologies such as adaptive cruise control (which automatically adjusts the speed to follow the vehicle in front according to the selected following distance), IntelliLux LED matrix headlights (which automatically adapt to every traffic situation) and ergonomic seats certified by the back-specialists from AGR. The new Insignia also offers moderate cost of ownership compared with its competitors in the high-volume and premium segments.

Nine in ten of the new Insignia cars ordered so far come with the optional Navi 900 IntelliLink top-of-the-range infotainment system. The integrated navigation system features an eight-inch capacitive colour touchscreen. Navi 900 IntelliLink is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, bringing the world of smartphones into



The Insignia Grand Sport



Bringing smartphones into the car

the car. If OnStar is on board, smartphones can also connect to the car's powerful 4G/LTE Wi-Fi Hotspot[1] – which enables online audio streaming.

The popularity of the new Insignia in the marketplace is matched by its success in the international media. The new flagship has won prestigious awards such as Carbuyer's Best Large Family 2018, Best Family Car at the 2017 Scottish Car of the Year Awards and

Top Crossover Estate at the 4x4 Magazine Awards. Others top honours include the "Golden Steering Wheel" 2017 in Poland (Auto Swiat) and Slovenia (Auto Bild) as well as "Best Car 2017" (Fleet Cars & Vans, Fleet Auto Premium) in Poland and "Fleet News of the Year" (FLEET Magazine) in the Czech Republic.

The new Insignia has also proved its mettle against tough competition in comparison

tests carried out by automotive magazines across Europe. To date, the Insignia has won 23 of 40 comparison tests: four wins in Germany (Autostraßenverkehr July 26 and September 20, Auto Zeitung July 26, Auto Bild August 4); three wins in the Netherlands (AutoWeek 29/17 and online July 21, AutoVisie July 6) and the Czech Republic (auto.cz September 29, AutoTIP October 2, auto motor und sport October 17); two in Portugal (Auto

Hoje August 24, Auto Foco December 21), Belgium (Le Moniteur Automobile November 27, AutoWereld December 1), Poland (Auto Swiat July 10 and July 17), Sweden (Teknikens Värld August 27, Vi Bilägare January 2018), and the United Kingdom (What Car? August 4, Auto Express January 17, 2018); and one each in France (caradisiac.com), Slovakia (auto motor und sport October 10) and Norway (Motor November 4).



The Insignia is available in Grand Sport and Sports Tourer body styles plus a Country Tourer and GSi performance model

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| 47 Monthly Payments of | £249.98 | Total Amount Payable | £23,091.06 |
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Brendon Batson reads out his tribute



A picture of Cyrille, a Baggies shirt and his trademark cap



One-time Villa forward Dwight Yorke



Ex-boss at Albion and Villa Ron Atkinson



Tears from fans at the memorial service



Adrian Chiles among the mourners



Former Villa striker Dion Dublin



Beverley Knight performs during the memorial service for Cyrille Regis

Phenomenal footballer – and an even better man

STARS paid tribute to footballing 'pioneer' Cyrille Regis at an emotional service, describing him as 'a superstar of the day, but a man of the people'.

At the service at The Hawthorns dedicated to his remarkable life, it was not just Cyrille's prowess on the pitch that was hailed. His humility and grace as a man was also celebrated.

Regis was described by his former boss Ron Atkinson as 'a phenomenal footballer and an even better bloke'. Former Liverpool and England star John Barnes called Cyrille 'an ambassador for humanity'.

And that praise for the former Albion, Wolves, Villa and Coventry forward's character was a recurring theme from all those who took the time to share memories of him. Among those at the service were Brighton boss Chris Hughton, Regis's nephew Jason Roberts, and ex-England stars Barnes, Carlton Palmer and Viv Anderson.

Albion fan and broadcaster Adrian Chiles, club legend 'Super' Bob Taylor and former Baggies and Wolves striker Don Goodman all attended. Soul star Beverley Knight performed during the service, while Chris Kamara, Les Ferdinand and Dwight Yorke also turned up.

Humility

Barnes heaped praise on Cyrille's personality, saying it even outshone his skills as a striker.

He said: "Cyrille was a fantastic footballer but the greatest quality a human being can have in my opinion is humility – and for someone who was such a great person, he had humility in abundance.

"As much as he was a great footballer, a trail-blazer and a pioneer, his greatest quality was his humility. He was an ambassador for humanity. The way he was as a person far superseded what he was as a footballer – and he was a great footballer."

Big Ron, who managed Regis at Albion and briefly at Villa, said: "From a football point of view, Cyrille would always be the number nine in my best ever team. And as a person he was a great bloke. He was a phenomenal footballer and an even better bloke.

"He didn't go out of his way to fight any crusades but he changed football by being what he was, a role model to everybody. He conducted himself the right way both on and off the field."

CYRILLE REGIS 1958-2018

By David Cosgrove

"He didn't go out of his way to fight any crusades but he changed football by being what he was, a role model to everybody."

Brighton manager Chris Hughton said: "He leaves a lasting legacy because he played in a very difficult era for black players and had a big impact on the lives of those black players who followed him."

Now a Sky Sports presenter, Chris Kamara played in that same era as Cyrille and said the striker had blazed a trail for others to follow. Kamara said: "He was an icon to so many players. What a man, what a legend.

"To withstand abuse in the way that he did and handle it the way that he did shows the measure of the man."

Broadcaster Adrian Chiles said Cyrille became his first hero after he saw him at The Hawthorns back in 1977. Now aged 50, Chiles said: "Cyrille was my first hero and I thought he was indestructible so it makes you realise we are all mortal. He transcended football. There have been so many footballers across the world but very few you can name that transcend the game.

"It's a privilege to have known him."

Bob Taylor, who followed in Cyrille's footsteps as an Albion striker and Hawthorns favourite, said: "From a personal point of view, Cyrille was my coach when I was here, he was a mentor for me – and he was a friend.

"Anybody you speak to will tell you that he was an ambassador on the football pitch and an ambassador off it."

Don Goodman, who – like Regis – represented both Albion and Wolves, added: "Quite simply he was a boyhood hero of mine.

"As I got to know Cyrille through my links with West Bromwich Albion, I came to know what a great

man he was. Not just because he stood up in the face of racism but because he was an all-around good fellow. This man was a superstar of the day, but he was a man of the people. He always had time for people. That is testament to the man – not the footballer."

In a moving eulogy, his nephew Jason Roberts, who also wore the Albion colours, said: "Carrying his coffin with my cousins, uncle and family members, it was the first time it has been hard to be Cyrille Regis's nephew.

"People always wanted to spend time with him, to spend time around his influence. I was so fortunate to have that as a family member.

"The way he interacted with me or my family wasn't necessarily unique. Everybody was inspired by him, that's why I went on to play football.

"It's why my uncle David went on to have a football career, why I wanted to have a career.

"As an individual and a family we don't own the legacy of Cyrille Regis, everybody here does, everybody who's been touched by him, everybody who's been motivated to stay here in the cold and listen to his legacy.

Struggled

"He was a special man and his legacy must live on and through our memories of him."

Dave Regis, Cyrille's younger brother, said: "Like all of us, Cyrille had his ups and downs in life. There was a time after Laurie Cunningham died that he struggled to come to terms with it. He found life difficult, this is when he turned to God seeking some comfort in his life.

"When C met Julia he was back to the brother we knew. He was beaming when he introduced her, it was obvious that she made him happy. His faith brought him peace, he never forced it on anyone.

"We will miss his wisdom, his voice and his life. We will miss you bro, all day long."

Said John Sillett, Coventry City's FA Cup-winning manager: "I had the greatest job in football, managing a man called Cyrille Regis.

"An electric gifted character, he was a bonder of men. After the Cup final he said 'Sill you gave me the proudest day of my life in football' and that was an honour for me.

"The team respected him, they're all here today. They all know what a great man, what a man you could always talk to."

Injured Gavin sees title fight put back

FRANKIE Gavin's IBO Welterweight World title fight with Bethuel Ushona has been pushed back a month after the Birmingham fighter suffered an ankle injury in training. The February 23 fight against the Namibian for the vacant title, at the Genting Arena in Birmingham, has been rescheduled to March 24.

Tickets will be honoured from the original date and the undercard – which features the likes of Josh Stokes and includes two other IBO title fights – is expected to be relatively unaffected.

Gavin's trainer Dean Edwards admitted the injury – sustained during a training camp in Ireland – had been a setback but insisted it was merely a minor one and that Frankie would be fighting fit for the new date. He said: "Frankie has sprained the ligaments in his left ankle and been advised by medics to cease training for seven to ten days. But it's a minor problem.

Gavin said: "I'm gutted but I'll be back. There is no way I'm letting myself or anyone else down."

Selby on cue for an exhibition maximum

WORLD snooker champ Mark Selby racked up a 147 break when he checked in at Stourbridge Snooker Club. The world number one played 10 frames against local players and two raffle winners and knocked in a further three century breaks, including a 132 to kick off the evening.

Local snooker league stalwart Kevin Franklin, who helped organise the event, almost stole the headlines in the final frame of the evening when he lost on the black against the cue-man dubbed 'The Jester from Leicester'.

But while his potting skills drew plenty of plaudits, it was his all-round demeanour that really impressed Franklin. "Mark was a class act, not just on the table but off it as well," added Franklin. "I have been to a lot of these exhibition nights and organised a fair few, but this was the best one by far.

"He had time for everyone and was still there around midnight signing autographs and having pictures taken. Initially he had been due to play eight frames but when he turned up he said he would do a bit of a question and answer session and play a couple extra frames if we wanted."

Fundraising game for club mascot's family

MASCOTS will do battle at Halesowen Town FC for a match in memory of Albion mascot Richard Eades.

Richard, who dressed as Albi Bird, died of a heart attack on Boxing Day, aged 42. Fellow mascot and friend Dave Challenor, who donned the Baggie Bird costume, has organised the match. The mascots' clash will provide the curtain-raiser for match between a West Brom All-Stars team led by former midfielder Andy Johnson and Boing FC, the Albion supporters' team father-of-two Eades used to play for.

Dave is confident mascots from Wolves, Walsall, Birmingham City, Manchester City, Sheffield United, Sheffield Wednesday, Bradford City, Yeovil Town, Hartlepool, and Exeter City will all join in the match.

Hundreds of people have already registered an interest in coming along on April 29, part of a whole day devoted to fundraising for the Eades family. It starts at 11am. It will start with a nine-a-side tournament featuring teams from all aspects of Richard's life.



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Impressive setting for blue hoops

ATHLETES from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club travelled to Wollaton Park in Nottingham for the Midlands Cross Country Championships.

Events began early with age group races, culminating in the Senior Ladies race and the last cab off the rank, the Senior Men's race.

Wollaton Park has been a regular venue for Midlands and National Championships. It is an impressive setting with the hall overlooking acres of deer park, criss-crossed by runners as they meandered around the grass following the taped-off course.

The DK ladies had been unable to field a team. However they were represented by a brave couple of blue hoops who lined up alongside a quality field. The course covered 8k over three laps including some vicious climbs zig-zagging in front of Wollaton Hall, a couple of tree trunk hurdles and a muddy section of about 200m that started off like The Somme and got gradually worse. Helen Tromans was first home in 87th place in 39.33 and Hannah McGuire finished in 43.55 to take 155th place of the 250 finishers.

The men set off just as the ladies were finishing covering four laps and 12k in distance. The hills were certainly no easier and the muddy section was almost bottomless as the afternoon progressed.

Darran Bishop brought the hoops home in 53.52 in 196th place, Dave Norman was 228th in 55.21, Mark Homer was 261st in 57.03, Simon Blizzard finished in 298th place in 58.42, Dave Hickman was 372nd in 1.02.44 and Andrew Weaver was 408th in 1.04.56. Graham Wildgoose was 434th in 1.08.17 and Richard Jones was 436th in 1.08.24 with the club finishing as the 32nd team on the day.

Heathens eight-race fixture list compiled

CRADLEY Heathens have revealed their 2018 fixture list – with just eight dates in the diary.

Heathens will race only in the National Trophy, hosting home fixtures at Monmore Green with a 7.30pm start.

Director Nigel Pearson said: "Whilst there's a lot of excitement about the team we have assembled, the reality of the situation strikes when you see the fixture list and only eight matches."

"The only way we could return to full league racing is by finally securing a site of our own, or some financial support can be given to ensure we don't lose money by staging meetings at Birmingham."

"That said, we have a super team with some exciting young talent and I'm really looking forward to seeing them in Heathens colours."

Fixtures:
Apr 27: Coventry (a)
May 7: Stoke (H)
May 12: Stoke (a)
May 21: Coventry (H)
May 27: Buxton (a)
Jun 18: Buxton (H)
Jul 16: Birmingham (H)
August 1: Birmingham (a)

Old Hales contingent in county line-up

TWO Old Halesonians players were among the new faces in the Worcestershire & Herefordshire front row as they began their bid for an Iskitz Three Counties Championship hat-trick.

Sam Jones and Ethan Priest were joined by Bromyard tighthead Will Allman as the newcomers in W&H's starting line-up against a new-look Shropshire side at Worcester's Weston's Fields last night (Wednesday).

Club-mates Andy Holloway and Tom King were also in the line-up, with Matt Young among the replacements, bringing the Old Hales contingent

to five. Also featuring was Stourbridge's George Tildesley. The nucleus of last season's successful side remains including the captain, Bromsgrove flanker Jay Martin and Kidderminster Carolians scrum-half Chris Pinner, brother of former Worcestershire and Leicestershire cricketer Neil.

W&H will be attempting to complete a hat-trick of title wins in the competition having successfully defended their title last season, beating Greater Birmingham in the final at Edwardians.

W&H will play their second group match against Greater Birmingham at Birmingham

Exiles on February 21 with Shropshire hosting Greater Birmingham at Telford Hornets in the final group match on March 14.

The final between the top two teams in the group will be played at Ledbury on May 20.

Sponsored by Iskitz, a Malvern-based international sports kit suppliers, the Three Counties Championship is contested annually by the three Domestic Unions that comprise the North Midlands RFU and provides county representative rugby for players from outside the National Leagues.

YELTZ HIT BY LOSS OF POINTS

A POINTS deduction has added to Halesowen Town's woes. The club has been docked four points for fielding an ineligible player.

The penalty deals a big blow to the club's survival hopes.

Yeltz bosses admitted fielding Kalern Thomas for three games in September and October while he was still registered with Solihull Moors. A personal hearing with the Evo-Stik League was requested and Halesowen were fined £600.

Halesowen collected four points from the games Thomas played – against Worthington, Barwell and neighbours Stourbridge – and these have been deducted.

A club statement said the league met again on January 31 to discuss how the case breached its rules and the club were further charged with fielding an ineligible player, resulting in the loss of the points and another £100 fine. Halesowen are considering an appeal.

Slump

On the field, Halesowen's misery continued, shipping five goals in the second half to slump to defeat at Whitby.

The Yeltz started well, Ivor Lawton putting a shot wide early on and Myles Arnold shooting over, though Daniel Platt did make a couple of good saves.

But after the break it was one-way traffic. Whitby captain Steve Snaith opening the scoring on 51 minutes with Junior Mondal getting their second seven minutes later.

James Fairley soon made it three and a sweeping move on 69 minutes ended with Lewis Maloney slipping the ball through to Mondal for his second.

To compound matters, Snaith got his second before the end and Marcus Poscha was sent off for Yeltz after a poor tackle on Mondal.

Rushall Olympic are the visitors to The Grove on Saturday.

In the swing for adding to haul



Dudley Golf Club member James Ilsley with his clutch of trophies

A RISING star at Dudley Golf Club has added to his growing haul of silverware.

James Ilsley, aged 12, from Sedgley, continues to make great strides on the fairways and has been crowned the club's player of the year for the fourth year in a row.

James, who plays county golf for Worcestershire under-14s, is dominating the local junior scene, also picking up the best gross score and order of merit for the fourth year in a row. In

addition to scooping the end of year accolade, James dominated in club events around the picturesque Turner's Hill course, winning eight of the 10 tournaments he entered.

James' love for the game blossomed following lessons with ex-Walker Cup player Darren Prosser. The youngster has recently joined The Belfry. James' mother Samantha Russell, who runs the club's junior section, said: "He's been getting better every year. I'm very proud."

Josie jumps to third place on senior GB debut

HALESOWEN athlete Josie Oliarnyk, competing for Great Britain, finished third in the long jump with a leap of 5.74m at an indoor meeting in Bratislava.

Coached by Dominic McNeill, Josie is one of the leading juniors in this discipline and competed in a senior GB vest for the first time.

Back in Stourbridge, Halesowen ACC Ladies competed in the Stourbridge Ladies 7K with Sam Morton coming home in second and first Ladies Master. Julie Powell was sixth, Caroline Lambert ninth and Anna Cosimetti 12th with Marion Bailey 33rd of the 89 finishers.

In the 10.3 miles "Stourbridge Stagger", in very heavy conditions, Master's men Dave Lewis was 28th, James Parker 53rd, Paul Allen 172nd and 1st M70, with Paul Woods 251st of the 394 finishers.

This weekend sees both the men and Ladies teams vying for an outside chance of promotion in their respective leagues.

Rivals meet for place in Hunt Cup quarters

DUDLEY Town and Tipton Town meet next Wednesday for a place in the quarter-finals of the JW Hunt Cup.

Opponents for the winners will be either Alvechurch, Heath Hayes or Wolverhampton Casuals. The first two have yet to play their first round tie, which has been postponed three times.

Already in the quarter-finals are Wall-sall Wood and Paget Rangers who play for a semi-final place on Tuesday. Paget ended Tividale's hopes with a 1-0 win in the second round.

A second semi-finalist will be known after Sporting Khalsa play Atherstone Town on February 27.

Glassboys in semi-final

STOURBRIDGE reached the Birmingham Senior Cup semi-finals on Monday with a 3-2 victory at Coleshill Town, debutant Edison Antonio with an 85th-minute winner to add to goals from Leon Broadhurst and Connor Gater.

Glassboys picked up a share of the spoils against third-placed Shaw Lane in the Evo-Stik Premier on Saturday. Luke Benbow's cross deceived goalkeeper Eddie Wilczynski to equalise an early Alex Byrne effort.

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